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Anonymous
July 14, 1938

The singular combination which Count Tolstoi presents, in all of his fiction, of ultra literalness with the most poetic fancy and the strongest religious feeling, is remarkably exemplified in this sketch, which we copy from *Fraser's Magazine.* The curiously close attention to details which is paid by the Russian writers is matched only by the breathless interest with which we follow them. Although these details have, as a rule, nothing to do with the main current of the story, they give an almost appalling vividness and strength to it, however slight it may be.

WHAT MAKES PEOPLE TO LIVE.

We know that we have passed from death into life, because we love the brethren. If any man love not his brother, he abideth in death. (I. St. John, iii. : 14.)

And he that hath this world's goods and seeth his brother in need and shutteth up his heart from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him? (iii. : 17.)

My children, let us not love in word or in tongue, but in deed and in truth. (iii. : 18.)

Love is of God, and he that loveth is born of God and knoweth God. (iv. : 7.)

He that loveth not knoweth not God; for God is love. (iv. : 8.)

No one has seen God at any time. If we love one another God dwelleth in us. (iv. : 12.)

God is love and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God and God in him. (iv. : 16.)

He that saith I love God and hateth his brother lieth; for he that loveth not his brother, whom he hath seen, how can he love God, whom he hath not seen? (iv. : 20.)

I.

In the house of a peasant there lodged a boot-maker with his wife and children. He had no home and no land of his own, and supported himself and his family by his trade of boot-making. Bread was dear and labor cheap, and all his earnings were spent on food. The boot-maker and his wife had but one sheepskin between them, and this was worn into tatters; he had

been saving money for more than a year to buy a new one.

Toward Autumn the boot-maker had got together enough savings; there were three ruble notes in his wife's chest, and five rubles twenty kopecks were owed him by peasants in the village.

Early in the morning he prepared to set off to the village to get the sheepskin. He put on a woman's wadded nankeen doublet over his shirt, and over that a cloth coat, put the three ruble notes in his pocket, broke off a stick, and started after breakfast. He thought as he plodded on, "I shall receive five rubles from a peasant, and with this along with my three I will buy a skin."

When the boot-maker reached the village, he visited a countryman—he was not at home; his wife had promised the week before to send her husband with money, but had not given it. He went to another. This man swore he had no money, and could only give twenty kopecks for mending a pair of boots. The boot-maker thought he could take the skin on credit, but the tanner did not believe in credit.

"Give me money," he said, "and then you can have anything you like; we know how difficult it is to get one's money back."

So it turned out that the boot-maker could do no business to speak of; he had only received twenty kopecks for repairs, and a peasant had given him an old pair of felt boots to mend.

The down-hearted boot-maker drank off twenty kopecks' worth of vodka, and went home without the skin. Early in the morning he had felt half-frozen, but when he had drunk, he no longer felt the want of a sheepskin. He paced along, with one hand tapping the hard-frozen road with his stick, and swinging backward and forward the felt boots he held in the other. As he went he talked to himself as follows:

"Well, I declare, I feel quite warm without a sheepskin. I have drunk a tumbler; it plays through all my veins. No need of a warm skin now. I have quite

forgotten all my troubles. What a man I am, after all! What do I need? I shall be able to do without a sheepskin; I shall never want one again. My wife will have a cold time of it—that's the only objection. Besides, it is downright shameful; you work for a man, and he leads you about. Well, look here; if you don't bring money, I will take away your hat, indeed I will. It's really too bad; he pays by driblets! But what can you do with some twenty kopecks? Drink—that's all! He says: 'I'm in need.' So he can be in need, and I can't. You have a home and cattle, and all that you want, while I have nothing; all my property is in myself; you have your home-made bread, and I have to buy it wherever I can, and bread alone costs three rubles a week. I shall get home and find the bread has run out. Another fresh supply for one ruble and a half that I have to make ready. So you shall have to give me my due."

Thus talking to himself, the boot-maker approached a chapel at the turn of the road, and saw behind it something whitish. It was growing dusk; the boot-maker looked very attentively, and could not make out what this could be. There is no stone like that here, he thought. A beast, perhaps. It is not like a beast; the upper part is like a man, but still it looks too white for a man. Besides, what should a man be doing here?

He went a little nearer, and now there was no mistake about it. What a wonderful thing! It was a man alive or dead, sitting on the flint stones, and leaning motionless against the chapel. The boot-maker shuddered and thought to himself, "A man has been murdered; they have cut him up and thrown him down here; if I go up quite close to him, I shall not be able to clear myself."

And the boot-maker went by. He passed round the chapel, losing sight of the man. As he was passing by the chapel, however, he turned his head, and saw the man lean forward. He was shaking with cold, and staring at him. The boot-maker was the more afraid, and thought to himself: "Shall I go up to him or pass

him by? Shall I go, in spite of the danger? Who knows what he is? I dare say he came hither through no good deeds. Suppose I go up to him, and he jumps up and throttles me and no escape is left. And if he doesn't throttle me, I shall still have to bother myself with him. But what shall I do with him? Surely I can't deprive myself of my last clothes and clothe him. God spare me from him."

The boot-maker hastened his steps. He had nearly left the chapel behind him, but his conscience pricked him.

He stopped on the road.

"What are you about, Simon?" he said to himself. "This poor man is dying in need, and you are afraid, and leave him in the lurch. So you are richer than usual, are you? Are you afraid of being stripped of your riches? Nay, Simon, that's bad!"

Simon turned round and went up to the man.

II.

Simon went up to the man and eyed him attentively. He was a young man, in the full strength of manhood; there were no marks of blows on his body, but he was evidently half-frozen and out of heart. He propped himself as he sat, and did not look on Simon. He seemed too much exhausted to lift up his eyes. Simon went quite close to him, and suddenly the man seemed to wake up, turned his head a little, opened his eyes, and looked upon Simon. And that look of his went to Simon's heart. He threw down his felt boots, took off his girdle, laid it on the boots, and stripped off his overcoat.

"We must have some talk together," he said. "Come, put on a thing or two."

Simon placed his hand under the man's elbow, and began to raise him up. The man lifted himself, and Simon saw that his body was shapely and clean, that his arms and legs were not broken, and that he had a sweet face. Simon threw his overcoat over his shoul-

ders, but he could not catch the sleeves. Simon guided his arms for him, straightened the overcoat, wrapped it round him, and tightened it with the girdle.

Simon took off his old fur cap, with the intention of putting it on the man, but his head began to feel so cold that he thought to himself, "I am quite bald-headed, but he has long curly locks; I had better lend him my boots," and he put the cap on again.

He made him sit down, and put on him his felt boots.

When the boot-maker had clothed him, he said:

"Well, my lad, you must take exercise and warm yourself. Can you go?"

The man stood still and looked pleasantly on Simon, but did not utter one single word.

"Can't you speak, then? It won't do to spend the Winter here. We must go to my home. Here, take my cudgel. Stamp your feet and shake yourself."

The man set off; he walked without difficulty, and did not lag behind.

As they went along Simon asked:

"Where do you come from?"

"Not from these parts."

"That I see; I know all who live in these parts. How came you here at the chapel?'

"I mustn't say."

"Perhaps some one has offended you?"

"No one has offended me; God has punished me."

"Of course, everything is done by God; but still, one has to abide somewhere. Whither do you want to go?"

"It's all one to me."

Simon wondered; the man didn't look like a mischief-maker; his words were soft, but he objected to speaking of himself. Simon thought to himself, "Who knows what may have happened?" and he said to his companion:

"Never mind, come to my home; at least you'll warm yourself."

Simon reached his yard, and the stranger did not lag behind, but walked by his side. A biting wind began to rise and find its way under Simon's coat, and he

began to get sober and to feel quite frozen. He sniffed as he went, wrapped himself round in his woman's doublet, and thought, "Here's a pretty sheepskin. Matrona won't praise me for this! I went off to get one, and I come home even without my overcoat, yes, and along with a half-clothed man." The thought of Matrona made him feel uneasy. But when he regarded the stranger, he remembered the look the man gave him at the chapel, and his heart throbbed with delight.

III.

Simon's wife rose early. She cut up wood, brought water, fed the infant, ate, and thought to herself again and again, "When shall I bake bread, to-day or to-morrow?" A large bit remained.

"Should Simon dine away and not eat much supper, there will be enough bread for to-morrow," she reflected.

Matrona turned the bit over and over and thought to herself: "I won't bake now. There is no more than enough flour for one baking. We can manage till Friday."

Matrona took away the bread, and sat down at a table to sew a patch on her husband's shirt. As she sewed, she thought of her husband, and how he would buy a sheepskin.

"Perhaps the tanner will take him in. He's a simple fellow, that man of mine. He never tricks another himself, but a little child could take him in. That's a lot of money, eight rubles. One can get a fine coat for that. Not a dyed one, but a sheepskin. What straits I was put to last Winter for want of a sheepskin! I couldn't go to the stream, nor anywhere else. And now he has gone off with all my clothes. I haven't got a thing to put on. He didn't start early. It is time he was back again. Perhaps he has been tippling, that bird of mine."

Such thoughts had scarcely passed through Matrona's head, when the steps of the staircase began to creak.

Some one had come in. Matrona thrust in her needle, and went into the vestibule. She saw that two were coming in, Simon along with a countryman, with no hat on and in felt boots.

Matrona perceived at once the smell of wine in her husband. "Yes," she thought, "that's it. He has been tippling with some good-for-nothing fellow, and has even brought him along home with him."

Matrona let them pass into the cottage, and went in herself. She saw before her a stranger, a young, thin man, and Simon's overcoat on his shoulders. There was no shirt to be seen under the coat, and he wore no hat. He stood as he had come in, without moving and with downcast eyes. Matrona thought to herself, "That's a bad man—he's afraid."

Matrona frowned and moved away to the stove. There she stood and watched what they would do.

Simon took off his hat and sat on a bench like a good soul.

"Well, Matrona," he said, "let's have some supper."

Matrona muttered something between her teeth. She stood at the stove without moving, and looked first on one and then on the other, only turning her head as she did so. Simon saw that his wife was not herself, but he paid no attention to that, and took the stranger by the hand.

"Sit down, my friend," he said, "we will have some supper." The stranger sat on the bench.

"Well, wife, haven't you boiled anything yet?"

Matrona quite lost her temper.

"Not for you, indeed! I see you have drunk yourself mad. You went to get a sheepskin, and you've come back without an overcoat, and have brought home with you some half-clothed vagrant or other. I have no supper for you, you drunkard."

"Enough, Matrona; what do you talk nonsense for? You should first ask what sort of a man——"

"Tell me what you have done with the money."

Simon fumbled in his overcoat, drew out a bit of paper, and unfolded it.

"Here is the money. Triphon couldn't give me anything; he promised to pay me to-morrow."

Matrona felt more angry still; he had not bought a skin, and had clothed some vagabond or other in his last overcoat; yes, and had brought him home with him.

She snatched up the paper from the table and put it away, saying:

"I have no supper. We can't feed every half-clothed drunkard here."

"Ah, Matrona, hold your tongue. Listen first to what I have to say."

"Learn sense of a drunken fool! I was quite right in objecting to be your wife, you drunkard; mother gave me linen—you have spent it on drink."

Simon wished to explain to his wife that he had only drunk twenty kopecks' worth; he wished to say where he had found the man. Matrona did not give him the chance of putting in a word; she broke in at every two words on whatever he began to say. She even reminded him of things that had happened ten years before.

Matrona talked on without stopping, bustled up to Simon, and seized him by the arms of his coat.

"Give me my under-waistcoat; I had only one left, and you took it off me and put it on yourself. Off with it, you spotted dog."

Simon began to take off the under-waistcoat and draw out the arms. His wife tugged at it till the seams began to crack. Then she snatched it up, tossed it over her head, and made for the door. She was on the point of going out, but hesitated and stood still; her heart was agitated—she wished to smother her wrath and hear something about the stranger.

IV.

Matrona stood still and said:

"If he were a good man, he would not be almost naked like that; he has not even got a shirt to his

back. Had you gone for something good, you would tell me now where you picked up such a dandy."

"But I am telling you; on my way I saw this man almost naked and half-frozen to death at the chapel. It is not Summer now, to be almost naked. It was God who threw me in his way, or else he would have perished. But what was to be done? I therefore took him along with me, clothed him, and brought him hither. Everything may happen. Calm yourself. It's sinful, Matrona, to carry on like this. We must die some day."

Matrona wanted to have it out with her husband, but she cast a look on the stranger and kept silence. He was sitting quite still on the edge of the bench. His hands were folded on his knees, and his head was sunk on his breast. He was frowning, as if being strangled by something. Matrona became silent. Simon exclaimed:

"Matrona, have you no God in you?"

On hearing these words she gave another look at the stranger, and suddenly her heart melted. She moved away from the door, went up to the corner of the stove, and served supper. She placed a bowl on the table, poured out krass, took out the last bit of bread, and gave a knife and spoons.

"Sup a bit," she said.

Simon urged the stranger forward.

"Swallow a few spoonfuls, my lad," Matrona said.

Simon cut up the bread, crumbled it, and began to sup. Matrona sat at the corner of the table, propped herself up with her hand, and looked on the stranger.

She began to feel pity, and a certain fondness for him. The stranger suddenly brightened up, left off frowning, lifted up his eyes to Matrona, and smiled.

When they had supped, Matrona cleared the table, and began to question the stranger.

"Where do you come from?"

"I'm not from these parts."

"And how came you on the road?"

"I can't answer that."

"Who robbed you?"

"God punished me."

"Were you lying there without clothes on?"

"Yes, I was lying naked and half-frozen. Simon saw me, had pity on me, took off his overcoat, put it on me and told me to come hither. And here you have fed me, given me drink, and had pity on me. May God bless you!"

Matrona got up, took from the window-sill an old shirt of Simon's, the same that she had mended, and gave it to the stranger.

"Here, take this," she said. "I see you have no shirt on. Put it on, and sleep where you like, in the attic or on the stove."

The stranger took off his overcoat, put on the shirt, and lay down in the attic. Matrona extinguished the light, took the overcoat, and covered herself with a corner of it. She lay down, but did not sleep; her thoughts were full of the stranger.

When she remembered that the last bit of bread was eaten, and that there was none left for the next day—when she remembered that she had made a present of the shirt, she felt ill at ease; but she remembered how the stranger had smiled, and her heart rejoiced.

Matrona lay thus awake a long time and listened. Simon, too, was awake; he was pulling the overcoat over him.

"Simon!"

"Well?"

"We have eaten the last bit of bread, and I haven't baked any. What shall we do to-morrow? Shall I borrow some of Godmother Melany?"

"If we live, we shall have enough."

His wife lay a little longer without speaking.

"He's evidently a good man, but why doesn't he speak of himself?"

"He can't, no doubt.'

"Simon!"

"Well?"

"We give to him, but how is it that nobody gives us anything?"

Simon did not know what to answer. He said, "Enough of talking," turned over, and fell asleep.

V.

Simon awoke at daybreak; the children still slept; the wife had gone to borrow bread of some neighbors. The stranger of the day before was sitting alone on a bench in his shirt-sleeves. His eyes were turned upward, and he looked more cheerful than he did the evening before.

"Well, good friend," said Simon, "the stomach asks for bread, and the naked body asks for clothes. One must eat and drink. What is your trade?"

"I have no trade."

Simon wondered, and said:

"Perhaps you're willing to learn. There's nothing one can't learn."

"Other people work, and I will work too."

"What's your name?"

"Michael."

"Well, Michael, you don't want to speak of yourself. That's your own business. But one has to eat and drink. If you do what I tell you, I will keep you."

"God bless you! I will set to and learn. Show me what I must do."

Simon took up a piece of unwound, pitched thread, put it on his fingers, and began to wind it.

"It is easy enough, look!"

Michael looked, put it on his fingers in the same way, understood at once, and began to wind.

Michael wound the ends; Simon showed him how to close them. This, too, Michael understood at once. His host showed him how to grind; and this also Michael understood at once.

Whatever work Simon showed him how to do, he was able to comprehend at once, and the third day he was working as if he had been sewing for an age. He worked on without stopping, ate little, and when they stopped working, he would silently look upward. He

did not walk in the street, nor talk too much, nor joke, nor laugh.

Only once they saw him smile. That was on the first evening, when the wife was preparing to give him some supper.

VI.

Day after day, week after week, passed by; a whole year had slipped round, and Michael was still living as before, and at work with Simon. Every one praised the work of Simon's apprentice. It was said that no one could put together a pair of boots so neatly and so strongly as Michael. Far and wide they began to order boots of Simon, and he began to live quite at ease.

One day in Winter, when Simon and Michael were working together, a coach on runners drove up to the cottage. They looked out of the window; the coach drew up opposite the cottage, a youth jumped down from the driver's seat and opened the door. A young man in a fur coat stepped out of the coach, walked up to Simon's cottage, and reached the staircase. Matrona rushed out and threw open the door. The gentleman stooped and entered. When he straightened himself, his head nearly touched the ceiling.

Simon stood up and made a bow. The gentleman astonished him. He had not seen folks like that. Simon himself was thin, and Michael was a lanky fellow; as for Matrona, she was like a dried chip, but here was one who seemed to have come from another world—with a handsome, well-formed bust, a throat like a bullock's, he looked for all the world like a figure in marble.

The gentleman stopped a few moments to take breath, removed his fur coat, sat on a bench, and said:

"Who is the master workman here?"

Simon stood forward and said:

"I, your honor."

"Hi, Theodore!" the gentleman called to his servant, "bring me the parcel."

Theodore ran off and brought it in. The gentleman took the parcel and put it on the table.

"Untie it," he said. The youth untied it.

The gentleman pointed to some boot-maker's leather, and said to Simon:

"Listen, boot-maker; do you see that?"

"I do, your honor," he said.

"But do you realize what kind of leather that is?"

Simon turned it over and said:

"Very good leather."

"Very good, you say; you never saw the like, you fool. That's German; I paid twenty rubles for it."

Simon was quite startled, and said:

"Where should we have seen the like?"

"Well, well, can you make me a pair of boots of that leather?"

"I can, your honor."

"So you can, can you?" said the gentleman in a loud voice. "Don't forget whom you'll be working for, and what leather you'll be using. You must make me a pair of boots such as will last me a whole year without running down or wearing out. If you can do this, take the leather and cut it up; but if you can't, don't take it and don't cut it up. I tell you beforehand, if the boots wear out or run down before that time, I'll have you put in prison; but if they last a year without wearing out or running down, you shall be paid ten rubles."

Simon was so startled he did not know what to answer. He turned his eyes on Michael.

Then he gave him a nudge and said:

"Shall we take the job in hand?"

Michael nodded. "By all means," he said.

Simon followed Michael's advice. He took an order for a pair of boots fit to last a whole year without wearing out or running down.

The gentleman told the youth in a loud voice to pull the boot off his left foot, and stretched it out. "Take my measure," he said.

Simon sewed paper together and made a measure 12 vershoks long, gave a look, knelt down, covered his

hand carefully with his apron, so as not to soil the gentleman's sock, and began to measure. He measured the sole, measured the instep, and began to measure the calf of the leg. The measure proved too short. The calf was as thick as a beam.

"See," he said, "don't make the boot-leg too narrow."

Simon began to sew on more paper. The gentleman sat and looked at the others in the room.

"Who's that?" he said, looking at Michael.

"He's my chief apprentice; he'll have a hand in the job."

"Now look you to it," said the gentleman to Michael; "don't forget. Make me a pair of boots that'll last a whole year." Simon gapes at Michael, and sees that Michael does not even look at the gentleman, but stares at a corner behind him, as if perceiving somebody there. Michael stares and stares again, and smiles.

"Well, you fool, what are you gaping at?" the gentleman said. "Better look to it, and see that they're ready in time."

To which Michael answered:

"They shall be ready in a trice when wanted.

"All right."

The gentleman put on his boots and fur coat, wrapped it round him, and made for the door. Forgetting to stoop, he struck his head against the lintel.

He fumed, rubbed his head, entered his coach, an drove off.

When the gentleman had driven off, Simon said:

"What a flint! You wouldn't kill the like of him with a crowbar. If a beam were broken over his head, he wouldn't feel much pain."

And Matrona added:

"Such a man as that never crossed our door. Even death can't pull the rivets out of such a one as he."

VII.

And Simon said to Michael, "Well, we've some work now, but let us not get into a mess. The material is

dear and the gentleman hot-tempered, but how are we to avoid mistakes! Now you look here; you can make to measure better than I can; you have better eyes and your fingers are more nimble. You cut out the leather, and I will finish sewing the boot-tops."

Michael did as he was bid; took the gentleman's leather, spread it out on the table, doubled it, took up a knife, and began to cut it out.

Matrona came up and looked to see how Michael was cutting out. She was astonished to see how he was going to work. Matrona had a knowledge of boot-making. She looked and saw that Michael was not cutting in the usual way, but in a peculiar round shape.

Matrona was going to say something, but she thought to herself: "No doubt I don't understand how to make gentleman's boots; no doubt Michael knows better—I won't interfere." Michael cut out a pair, took hold of an end, and began to sew and make one end, as they make slippers, and not two, as they make boots. Matrona wondered at this too; but still she did not interfere. Michael sewed on. They began to double. Simon got up and looked. Michael had made slippers of the gentleman's leather.

Simon was horrified. "How's that?" he thought, "Michael has lived here a whole year, and has never yet made a mess of anything, and now he has got us into trouble. The gentleman ordered boots with double soles, and he has put together slippers without soles. The leather is spoiled. What shall I do to satisfy the gentleman? You won't find such leather as that."

And he said to Michael:

"What have you done for me, my lad? You have killed me. Don't you know that the gentleman ordered boots? What have you been making?"

He had hardly begun to speak to Michael when the door began to rattle; some one was knocking. They looked out at the window, and saw that some one had come on horseback, and was tying up his horse. They opened the door; the servant of the gentleman whom they had seen before came in.

"Good day to you."

"Good day. What do you want?"

"My lady sent me to speak about the boots."

"What about them?"

"The gentleman doesn't need boots now. He has taken his leave of the world."

"How so?"

"When he had left you he didn't reach home alive, but died in the coach. The coach came home, they went to help him out, and he was lying stiff at the bottom like a log. He had to be pulled out by force. The lady sent to say: 'Tell the boot-maker that the boots are not wanted for the gentleman who came here, left leather, and ordered boots; say that slippers are wanted for the corpse, and that they must be made as quickly as possible.' My orders are to wait here till they are ready and take them away with me."

Michael took from the table the cuttings of leather, made a roll of them, took up the slippers ready made, clapped them together, rubbed them with his apron, and gave them to the youth. The youth took the slippers.

"Good-bye, master! Good luck to you!"

VIII.

Another year passed by, and then another, and a sixth year found Michael and Simon still living together. Michael lived on as before. He went nowhere, spoke little, and during all that time had only smiled twice—once when Simon's wife was giving him to sup, and again on the gentleman. Simon was delighted with his workman. He did not ask him any more where he came from; his only fear was that Michael would leave him.

One day they sat at home together. The mistress was putting irons in the stove and the children were running on the benches and looking out of the windows. Simon was sharpening at one window, and Michael was hammering on a sole at the other.

One of the children ran along a bench to Michael, leaned on his shoulder, and looked out of the window.

"Uncle Michael, look! a merchant's wife and two little girls are coming to see us. And one of the girls is lame."

The child had scarcely spoken these words when Michael threw down his work, turned to the window, and looked down into the street.

Simon wondered. Michael had never looked down into the street before, but now he pressed close to the window and looked at something below. Simon looked out, too; it was true. He saw a woman coming up to his yard leading by the hand two little girls in furred pelisses and in kerchiefs. The little girls were as like as two peas; there was no telling one from the other. The only difference between them was that one girl had hurt her foot; she limped.

The woman went up the staircase into the passage, felt about for the door, pressed the latch, and opened it. She made the little girls pass in before her, and entered the cottage.

"Good day, mistress."

"Good day. What might you want?"

The woman sat down on a chair, the little girls standing close up beside her; they looked with astonishment on the people.

"These two girls want shoes for the Spring."

"By all means; it's easily done. We have never made such small ones, but that's no matter. They can be double-soled or of linen braided. Michael is first-rate for that."

Simon looked at Michael, and saw that he had thrown down his work and kept his eyes fixed on the little girls.

Simon was astonished at Michael. The little girls were no doubt very pretty; they had dark eyes, chubby, rosy cheeks, and wore pretty dresses and pelisses, but for all that Simon could not understand why Michael fixed his eyes upon them. He had often seen such before.

Simon wondered. He began to speak to the woman

—to bargain. They came to terms, and he made a measure. The woman took up the lame child and put it on her knees.

"You must measure this one twice over," she said. "Make one shoe to fit the crooked foot, and three for the straight one. Their feet are exactly the same size. They are twins."

Simon took the measure and said to the lame child:

"How comes it that you are lame—such a good little girl? Were you born so?"

"No; mother crushed me."

Matrona joined in. She wished to know from her who the woman was and who the children were.

"Are you not their mother?"

"I am not their mother, nor a relative of theirs, mistress. They are perfect strangers—adopted."

"Not your children, and what care you take of them!"

"And well I may. They were my foster-children. I had a child of my own; God took it to another world; I didn't take such care of it as I do of them."

"Whose are they, then?"

IX.

The conversation went on, and the woman told the following story:

"It happened six years ago," she said. "In one week these children were left orphans; their father was buried on Tuesday, and their mother died on Friday. They had been left fatherless for three days, when their mother was taken ill. She did not live out the day. At that time I was living a peasant's life with my husband. We were next-door neighbors. Their father, a peasant, was working in a wood. In some way a tree fell on him. It caught him across the body. They had hardly drawn him out when he breathed his last, and in that very week his wife gave birth to twins —these two children. The poor woman was quite alone.

"In the morning I went to visit my neighbor. When

I got to her cottage, the dear soul was already stiff. At the moment when she died she rolled over and crushed one of her little girls, putting her foot out of joint. The villagers gathered together, washed her, laid her out, dug a grave, and buried her. They were good, kind souls. The little girls were left alone. What was to be done with them? I took them for a time to my home. The peasants gathered together: they were puzzled what to do with them. 'Take care of the little girls for a while, Maria,' they said to me, 'and give us time to turn the matter over.' I fed the straight one, and the other I thought it unnecessary to feed. I never expected she could live, and then I thought the dear little angelic soul was more dead than alive, and I took pity on her and fed her also. God so ordered it that I fed these infants and buried my own before the end of the second year. God gave me no other child, and we gradually became better and better off. We are now living with the merchant at the mill. I have good wages and a pleasant life of it. But I have no children of my own. What should I do alone without these? How can I help loving them?"

With one hand she clasped to her breast the little lame child, and with the other she wiped away a tear.

Matrona sighed and said:

"This bears out the truth of the proverb, 'You will live without father and mother, but you will not live without God.'"

This conversation was going on between them when, suddenly, as by sheet lightning, the whole cottage was lighted up from the corner where Michael was sitting. All eyes were turned upon him, and they saw Michael sitting, his hands folded on his knees. He was looking upward and smiling.

X.

When the woman left with the children, Michael rose from his bench and put down his work; he took off his apron, made a bow to the master of the house, and said:

"Forgive me, master. God has forgiven me; you also forgive me."

And his host saw that light streamed forth from Michael's face. Simon rose, bowed to Michael, and said:

"I see, Michael, that you are no ordinary man. I have no right to detain you or to question you. But answer this one question: When I found you and brought you home with me, why were you so sad? And when my wife gave you to sup, why did you smile on her, and since that time wear a brighter look? After that, when the gentleman ordered the boots, you smiled a second time, and from that moment wore a brighter look still; and just now, when the woman came in with the little girls, you smiled a third time, and brightened up altogether. Tell me, Michael, how comes it that you shine so, and why did you smile three times?"

And Michael said:

"I shine because I was punished and God has forgiven me. I smiled three times because I had need to learn three words of God. Now I have learned these words. I learned one when your wife had pity on me, and that is why I smiled the first time; I learned the second word when the rich man ordered the boots, and I smiled a second time; and just now, when I saw the little girls, I learned the last, the third, and I smiled a third time."

And Simon said:

"Tell me, Michael, why you were punished by God, and tell me those words of God, that I, too, may learn them."

"It was for this reason," said Michael, "that God punished me, because I disobeyed Him. I was an angel in heaven, and disobeyed God.

"I was an angel in heaven, and the Lord sent me to take a soul away from a woman. I winged my way to the earth and saw a woman lying alone who had given birth to twins—two little girls. The infants moved about restlessly by the mother's side, and she could not reach them to draw them to her breast. The wo-

man saw me, understood that God had sent me for a soul, and said to me in tears, 'Angel of God! I have but just buried my husband; he was killed by a tree in the wood. I have no sister or aunt or countryman to bring up my orphans. Don't take away my soul; let me myself give food and drink to the infants, and bring them up. The children cannot live without father and mother.' I listened to the mother, put the infants in their mother's arms, and rose up on my wings to the Lord. I winged my way to the Lord, and said: 'I could not take away the soul from their parent. Their father was killed by a tree, their mother gave birth to twins, and prayed me not to take the soul away from her. "Let me give food and drink to the children and bring them up," she said. "The infants cannot live without father and mother." I did not take a soul from the mother.' And the Lord said, 'Go take a soul from the woman, and learn three words: learn what people have, and what they have not, and what makes people to live. When you have learned this, you will return to heaven.' I flew back to the earth, and took the soul from the woman.

"The infants fell away from their mother's arms. The dead body rolled over on the bed, crushing one infant and putting its foot out of joint. I rose up above the village, in order to take up the soul to God, when a gust of wind caught my wings, they dropped, and the soul went up to God alone, but I fell by the way to the earth.'

XI.

Simon and Matrona understood now whom they had clothed and fed, and who had lived in their home. They wept for joy and fear, and the angel said:

"I was left in the field naked and alone. I had never known human needs; I had never known hunger or cold before. I became a man. Hungry and half-frozen, I knew not what to do. I saw in the field a chapel made for the worship of God. I went up to God's chapel, and thought to shelter myself there. The

chapel was locked; I could not enter. So I sat down behind the chapel to find shelter from the wind. The evening drew on; nearly frozen and hungry, I had quite lost heart, when suddenly a sound caught my ear —a man was passing along the road. He was carrying a pair of boots, and he talked to himself as he went. This was the first mortal face I had seen since I became a man; it filled me with fear, and I turned away my eyes. I heard the man talking to himself about how he should shelter his body from the cold in Winter, and how he should feed his wife and children. 'I am perishing of cold and hunger,' I thought to myself, 'and a man passes along whose only thought is how to cover himself and his wife with a skin, and how to get bread for them both. He cannot help me.' The man saw me, knit his brows, looked more frightened than before, and passed by. I was in despair, when suddenly I heard the man returning. And when I looked on him, I did not know him again: before, I had seen death in his face, but now it had a bright look, and in his face I knew God. He came up to me, clothed me, took me with him, and brought me to his home. I went to his house; a woman came to meet us, and began to speak. The woman had a frightened look, more so than the man, and from her mouth there came forth a mortal spirit; the odor of death quite took away my breath. She wished to drive me out into the cold; I knew she would die if she did so. Suddenly her husband put her in mind of God, upon which a change came over the woman. She gave us to sup, and when she did so, she looked on me. I looked on her also. There was now no death in her; she was alive, and in her I knew God.

"Then I remembered the first word of God, 'You shall know what is in people.' I had learned that in people is love. I was glad, because God had begun to make things clear to me, as He had promised, and I smiled for the first time. But this was all the knowledge I could gather. I had not yet understood what is not given to people, and what makes people to live.

"I began to live with you. A whole year had passed by, when one day a man came to order boots, which should last a whole year without running down or wearing out. I looked upon him, and lo! I saw at his side my companion, the angel of death. I alone saw that angel, but I knew him, and knew that the sun would not set before he had taken the soul of the rich man. 'Man provides for himself for a whole year,' I thought to myself, 'but he does not know that he will not live on till the evening.' The second word of God came to my mind, 'You shall know what is not given to people.'

"I had learned already what is in people. Now I knew what is not given to people. It is not given to people to know what is needful for their body. And I smiled a second time. I was glad because I had seen my companion the angel, and because God had shown me the meaning of the second word.

"But I had more to learn still. I had not yet learned what makes people to live, so I lived on and waited till God would show me the last word. In the sixth year there came two little girls, with a woman, and I knew the children, and knew how those little girls were left alive. I knew and thought to myself: 'The mother begged for her children, and I believed her. I thought the children could not live without father and mother, but a strange woman fed them and brought them up.' When the woman had pity on the strange children, and wept, I saw in her the living God, and understood what makes people to live. I knew, also, that God had declared to me the last word, and had forgiven me. And I smiled a third time."

XII.

The whole of the angel's body was now clearly seen, and it was all clothed in dazzling light, too bright to look upon; and his voice had now a louder ring, and seemed to come from heaven, not from his own lips.

"I have learned," said the angel, "that every man

lives, not by care for himself, but by love. It was not given to the mother to know what her children needed to live by. It was not given to the rich man to know what he himself was in need of. And it is not given to any man to know if boots for one living or slippers for one dead will be needed by him toward evening.

"I was left alive when I was a man, not because I thought about myself, but because there was love in the man who passed by, and in his wife, and because they pitied and loved me. The orphans were left alive, not because they thought about themselves, but because there was love in the heart of a strange woman, who pitied and loved them. And all people live, not because they think about themselves, but because there is in people love.

"I knew already that God had given people life, and wished that they should live. But now I understood more than this.

"I understood that God was not willing that people should live apart, and that for this reason He had not shown them what each stood in need of, but willed that they should live together, and for this reason had shown them what all needed for their own good and the good of all.

"I understood now that people only seem to live by caring for themselves—that they live by love alone. He who lives in love lives in God, and God in him, because God is love."

Then the angel sang praises to God, and his voice made the cottage tremble. The ceiling opened, and a pillar of fire stretched upward from earth to heaven. Simon and his wife and children fell to the ground. And the angel stretched the wings on his back and rose up to heaven.

When Simon came to himself, the cottage stood as before, and there was no one there but the members of his family.

Here is an account of one of those awful adventures, which, however successfully they may be braved and lived through, leave an ineffaceable mark upon the mind, and often, as in the case of "the mouse" in this story, upon the bodies of their heroes. "A Mouse in a Jug" was written for ROMANCE by Harry Howard.

A MOUSE IN A JUG.

So you want to know how I happen to be so bald, when I am still a young man. It is not a long story, but I never like to tell it; in fact, I have never told it but once in all these years. Yes, you may write it out if you wish; it is not that I dislike to have people know it, but that it is painful for me to recall that terrible hour. This is the story:

In the spring of 1875, brother Fred and I broke away from the old homestead and went West to make our fortunes. After drifting about for some time, we found ourselves on the banks of a stream in southern Kansas called the Medicine River. Here we found rich land, plenty of timber, little danger from Indians, and it seemed likely that we should be directly in the path of a railroad, which was slowly extending westward. This was what we had been seeking, so without more ado we staked off two adjoining quarter-sections, and began the term of our "residence."

We erected a double shanty on the line between our claims, so that we lived together, and yet each was on his own land. Other men seeking homes soon came, many bringing their families, and before long we had several near neighbors. Better houses than dug-outs and sod-shanties began to be in demand, and as Fred and I were handy with tools, we soon had plenty of work.

Among the cliffs in our vicinity were vast quantities of gypsum rock, which, when burned in a kiln, is finer and better for plaster than lime. Our supply of gypsum was nearly exhausted, when a neighbor called on

us to build a house for him. Thus it was that, while Fred went to see about the timbers, he sent me to find a fresh deposit of gypsum, and, if possible, one more easily got at than any we had yet found.

Combining pleasure with business, I took my rifle, and, having easily found the deposit of gypsum I sought, I determined to explore the hills to the southward more thoroughly than I had yet done. All day I tramped through the woods and over the hills, enjoying the early summer weather, and learning much of the surrounding country.

Late in the evening, I found myself in a part of the country where I had never been before, and several miles from home. I climbed a slight eminence to take an outlook and determine the easiest way home. Tired with my day's tramp and heated by the exertion of climbing the hill, I sat down to rest. While I was resting, I became deeply interested in the antics of a small cloud in the southwest. Though the air about me was perfectly calm, the cloud was rising and falling, writhing and twisting, as if in great pain. Suddenly other little patches of cloud came scurrying up, apparently bent on finding the cause of so much disturbance.

"That fellow has the colic," I said to myself, "and these are the doctors."

The fancy tickled me exceedingly. Apparently it was a very bad fit of colic, for the little cloud soon swelled to enormous proportions, and grew very black in the face.

"They'll have to bleed him or he'll have a fit," I chuckled.

This went on for some minutes, the cloud growing bigger and blacker till the lightning began to flash back and forth, and I awoke to the fact that a terrible storm was rapidly bearing down upon the very spot where I sat. It also dawned upon me that I had been watching the formation of a genuine cyclone, or "twister," as we called them, and had acted very foolishly in not seeking shelter before.

A huge oak stood on the hill near me, but I knew too

well the danger I incurred by seeking shelter under it. A hundred yards down the slope to the east was an immense bowlder, behind which I hastily concluded to crouch, if nothing better offered. Down the hill I dashed, hearing in the distance the dull crashing of the storm. Nearly at the foot of the hill lay the rock, close by a little gully. On rounding it, I was agreeably surprised to find a hole in the rocky ground large enough to admit my body. I knelt and peered in. It seemed to be a cave some ten or twelve feet deep, but I could see little of the interior. It would afford me shelter from the storm—but suppose I should find in it a bear or a mountain lion!

A sudden darkening of the air and a deafening crash from the timber on the other side of the hill decided me. Even a mountain lion was better than a cyclone, so I gently lowered myself, feet first. The hole by which I entered was in the roof of the cave near the east side. The wall I found to be rugged and slightly sloping, so that I climbed to the floor without accident. There was also a circular hole in the centre of the roof which answered the purpose of a skylight, though only about two feet in diameter.

This was all I had time to notice when the storm broke in awful fury. There was a terrible roar as the wind swept over the openings; then there was a heavy jar, and the cave grew suddenly dark. Looking up to note the cause, I was horror-struck. A single glance showed me that I had found something worse than mountain lions. The oak on top of the hill had been torn up and hurled down the slope against the bowlder, which it had rolled over the hole, thus imprisoning me.

Hastily I climbed up the sloping wall and strove to roll the stone away, though I well knew that a dozen men could not stir it. All in vain. Daniel in the lion's den was not more securely caged than I. His cave was sealed with the seal of King Darius, while mine bore the seal of the storm-king.

Giddy and sick at heart, I climbed down to the floor, and looked up at the skylight. Part of the tree lay

across the hole, and a limb hung temptingly inside as if to taunt me with an offer of help that was several feet beyond my grasp. I was a mouse in a jug.

As I stood there gazing wistfully at the mouth of my jug, my ear caught the sound of running water. I hurried to examine this new feature, remembering that I had not yet explored my cell. It was quickly done. I was in a cave about twelve feet each way, with neither stick nor stone to build a scaffold to raise me to the opening in the roof. A goodly stream of muddy water was pouring in at the side of the cave next to the little gully which I had noticed. I found a crevice in the rock by which the water entered, but it was not nearly large enough to allow me to escape.

The wind had died away as suddenly as it had risen, and rain was pouring in torrents. Soon I noticed that the water was coming in much more rapidly than it went out. Here was a new horror. Not only was I a mouse in a jug, but some one was pouring water into the jug.

Feeling suddenly faint, I sat down on the wet rock and tried to realize my situation. I was young, and life was full of charm for me; how could I give it up? —And in such a miserable, ignoble way! I was not a coward; I had faced death in the form of fierce beasts and fiercer men, and had never flinched. But to die in a hole with no effort to escape, no hope,—it was horrible!

Soon the water had risen to where I sat. I was almost driven mad by its demoniac laughter. Chuckling, gurgling, fairly shouting with fiendish glee, it came dancing about me, seeming to rejoice that I was so helpless, that I was a mouse in a jug. Frantic with rage at its hollow mocking mirth, I dashed again up the rugged wall and strove to roll the stone from my tomb. In vain. Hercules himself could not have done it.

Higher and higher rose the water, and more and more frantic were my efforts. I prayed, I cursed, I laughed and sang, and anon burst into childish tears, but the water never ceased its chuckling, and rose steadily all the

while. I could not cling long to the wall, and the water was soon up to my arm-pits. A little longer, and it was up to my chin, and I could hardly keep my footing.

By this time I was calmer, for my panic had worn me out, and the icy water was fast benumbing me. When it lifted me from my feet, I strove to shake off the torpor I felt stealing over me, and struck out mechanically to keep myself afloat. For some time I kept up the effort, until, looking up, the thought occurred to me that if I could only keep afloat long enough, the water might lift me within reach of the limb in the skylight.

The water now rose more slowly, for it had risen to the hole by which I had entered, and some was escaping there. Though hope renewed had increased my strength for the moment, I realized that I was fast failing, and the effort must come soon or I should be unable to draw my cramped and chilled body through the opening. Sinking low in the water, I leaped with all my strength toward the limb, still some feet above my head. Falling short, I dropped back and went completely under. As I rose to the surface, taking advantage of the momentum already acquired, I made one supreme effort, and seized the limb. Even now I marvel at the strength I still retained, enabling me to climb safely out and fall fainting on the ground.

It was almost a fortnight later when I regained consciousness. I had arrived at home near midnight, bruised, torn, haggard, and raving with the delirium of brain-fever brought on by that terrible experience. It left me bald as you see.

It is generally conceded that for graphic description of adventure, Mr. H. Rider Haggard stands unrivalled. Here is one of his most thrilling word-paintings. It first appeared in *Macmillan's Magazine*.

THE SPRING OF A LION.

THE story which is narrated in the following pages came to me from the lips of my old friend Allan Quatermain, or Hunter Quatermain, as we used to call him in South Africa. He told it to me one evening when I was stopping with him at the place he bought in Yorkshire. Shortly after that, the death of his only son so unsettled him that he immediately left England, accompanied by two companions, who were old fellow-voyagers of his, Sir Henry Curtis and Captain Good, and has now utterly vanished into the dark heart of Africa. He is persuaded that a white people, of whom he has heard rumors all his life, exists somewhere on the highlands in the vast, still unexplored interior, and his great ambition is to find them before he dies. This is the wild quest upon which he and his companions have departed, and from which I shrewdly suspect they never will return. One letter only have I received from the old gentleman, dated from a mission-station high up the Tana, a river on the east coast, about three hundred miles north of Zanzibar; in it he says they have gone through many hardships and adventures, but are alive and well, and have found traces which go far toward making him hope that the results of their wild quest may be a "magnificent and unexampled discovery." I greatly fear, however, that all he has discovered is death; for this letter came a long while ago, and nobody has heard a single word of the party since. They have totally vanished.

It was on the last evening of my stay at his house that he told the ensuing story to me and Captain Good, who was dining with him. He had eaten his dinner

and drunk two or three glasses of old port, just to help Good and myself to the end of the second bottle. It was an unusual thing for him to do, for he was a most abstemious man, having conceived, as he used to say, a great horror of drink from observing its effects upon the class of men—hunters, transport riders, and others—among whom he had passed so many years of his life. Consequently, the good wine took more effect on him than it would have done on most men, sending a little flush into his wrinkled cheeks, and making him talk more freely than usual.

Dear old man! I can see him now, as he went limping up and down the vestibule, with his gray hair sticking up in scrubbing-brush fashion, his shrivelled yellow face, and his large dark eyes, that were as keen as any hawk's, and yet soft as a buck's. The whole room was hung with trophies of his numerous hunting expeditions, and he had some story about every one of them, if only you could get him to tell them. Generally he would not, for he was not very fond of narrating his own adventures, but to-night the port wine made him more communicative.

"Ah, you brute!" he said, stopping beneath an unusually large skull of a lion, which was fixed just over the mantelpiece, beneath a long row of guns, its jaws distended to their utmost width. "Ah, you brute! you have given me a lot of trouble for the last dozen years, and will, I suppose, to my dying day."

"Tell us the yarn, Quatermain," said Good. "You have often promised to tell me, and you never have."

"You had better not ask me to," he answered, "for it is a longish one."

"All right," I said, "the evening is young, and there is some more port."

Thus adjured, he filled his pipe from a jar of coarse-cut Boer tobacco that was always standing on the mantelpiece, and still walking up and down the room, began:

"It was, I think, in the March of 1869 that I was up in Sikukuni's country. It was just after old Sequati's

time, and Sikukuni had got into power—I forget how. Any way, I was there. I had heard that the Bapedi people had got down an enormous quantity of ivory from the interior, and so I started with a wagon-load of goods, and came straight away from Middelburg to try and trade some of it. It was a risky thing to go into the country so early, on account of the fever, but I knew that there were one or two others after that lot of ivory, so I determined to have a try for it, and take my chance of fever. I had got so tough from continual knocking about that I did not set it down at much. Well, I got on all right for a while. It is a wonderfully beautiful piece of bush veldt, with great ranges of mountains running through it, and round granite koppies starting up here and there, looking out like sentinels over the rolling waste of bush. But it is very hot—hot as a stew-pan—and when I was there that March, which, of course, is autumn in that part of Africa, the whole place reeked of fever. Every morning, as I trekked along down by the Oliphant River, I used to creep out of the wagon at dawn and look out. But there was no river to be seen—only a long line of billows of what looked like the finest cotton wool tossed up lightly with a pitchfork. It was the fever mist. Out from among the scrub too came little spirals of vapor, as though there were hundreds of tiny fires alight in it—reek rising from thousands of tons of rotting vegetation. It was a beautiful place, but the beauty was the beauty of death; and all those lines and blots of vapor wrote one great word across the surface of the country, and that word was 'fever.'

"It was a dreadful year of illness, that. I came, I remember, to one little kraal of Knobnoses, and went up to see if I could get some *maas* (curdled buttermilk) and a few mealies. As I got near, I was struck with the silence of the place. No children began to chatter, and no dogs barked. Nor could I see any native sheep or cattle. The place, though it had evidently been recently inhabited, was as still as the bush round it, and some guinea fowl got up out of the prickly pear bushes

right at the kraal gate. I remember that I hesitated a little before going in, there was such an air of desolation about the spot. Nature never looks desolate when man has not yet laid his hand upon her breast; she is only lonely. But when man has been and has passed away, then she looks desolate.

"Well, I passed into the kraal, and went up to the principal hut. In front of the hut was something with an old sheep-skin *kaross* (rug) thrown over it. I stooped down and threw off the rug, and then shrank back amazed, for under it was the body of a young woman recently dead. For a moment I thought of turning back, but my curiosity overcame me; so going past the woman, I went down on my hands and knees and crept into the hut. It was so dark that I could not see anything, though I could smell a great deal—so I lit a match. It was a 'tand-stickor' match, and burnt slowly and dimly, and as the light gradually increased I made out what I thought was a lot of people, men, women, and children, fast asleep. Presently it burnt up brightly, and I saw that they too, five of them altogether, were quite dead. One was a baby. I dropped the match in a hurry, and was making my way out of the hut as hard as I could go, when I caught sight of two bright eyes staring out of a corner. Thinking it was a wild-cat or some such animal, I redoubled my haste, when suddenly a voice near the eyes began first to mutter, and then to send up a succession of awful yells. Hastily I lit another match, and perceived that the eyes belonged to an old woman, wrapped up in a greasy leather garment. Taking her by the arm, I dragged her out, for she could not, or would not, come by herself, and the stench was overpowering me. Such a sight as she was—a bag of bones, covered over with black shrivelled parchment. The only white thing about her was her wool, and she seemed to be pretty well dead except for her eyes and her voice. She thought that I was a devil come to take her, and that is why she yelled so. Well, I got her down to the wagon, and gave her a 'tot' of Cape smoke, and then,

as soon as it was ready, poured about a pint of beef-tea down her throat, made from the flesh of a blue vilderbeeste I had killed the day before, and after that she brightened up wonderfully. She could talk Zulu—indeed, it turned out that she had run away from Zululand in T'Chaka's time—and she told me that all the people that I had seen had died of fever. When they had died, the other inhabitants of the kraal had taken the cattle and gone away, leaving the poor old woman, who was helpless from age and infirmity, to perish of starvation or disease, as the case might be. She had been sitting there for three days among the bodies when I found her. I took her on to the next kraal, and gave the headman a blanket to look after her, promising him another if I found her well when I came back. I remember that he was much astonished at my parting with two blankets for the sake of such a worthless old creature. 'Why did I not leave her in the bush?' he asked. Those people carry the doctrine of the survival of the fittest to its extreme, you see.

"It was the night after I had got rid of the old woman that I made my first acquaintance with my friend yonder," and he nodded toward the skull that seemed to be grinning down at us in the shadow of the wide mantelshelf. "I had trekked from dawn till eleven o'clock—a long trek—but I wanted to get on; and then had the oxen turned out to graze, sending the voorlooper to look after them, meaning to inspan again about six o'clock, and trek with the moon till ten. Then I got into the wagon and had a good sleep till half-past two or so in the afternoon, when I got up and cooked some meat, and had my dinner, washing it down with a pannikin of black coffee—for it was difficult to get preserved milk in those days. Just as I had finished, and the driver, a man called Tom, was washing up the things, in comes the young scoundrel of a voorlooper driving one ox before him.

"'Where are the other oxen?' I asked.

"'Koos!' he said, 'Koos! (chief), the other oxen have gone away. I turned my back for a minute, and when

I looked round again, they were all gone except Kaptein here, who was rubbing his back against a tree.'

"'You mean that you have been asleep, and let them stray, you villain. I will rub your back against a stick,' I answered, feeling very angry, for it was not a pleasant prospect to be stuck up in that fever trap for a week or so while we were hunting for the oxen. 'Off you go, and you too, Tom, and mind you don't come back till you have found them. They have trekked back along the Middelburg Road, and are a dozen miles off by now, I'll be bound. Now, no words; go, both of you.'

"Tom, the driver, swore and caught the lad a hearty kick, which he richly deserved, and then, having tied old Kaptein up to the disselboom with a reim, they got their assegais and sticks and started. I would have gone too, only I knew that somebody must look after the wagon, and I did not like to leave either of the boys with it at night. I was in a very bad temper indeed, although I was pretty well used to these sort of occurrences, and soothed myself by taking a rifle and going to kill something. For a couple of hours I poked about without seeing anything that I could get a shot at, but at last, just as I was again within seventy yards of the wagon, I put up an old Impala ram from behind a mimosa thorn. He ran straight for the wagon, and it was not till he was passing within a few feet of it that I could get a decent shot at him. Then I pulled, and caught him half-way down the spine; over he went, dead as a doornail, and a pretty shot it was, though I ought not to say it. This little incident put me into rather a better temper, especially as the buck had rolled over right against the after part of the wagon, so I had only to gut him, fix a reim round his legs, and haul him up. By the time I had done this the sun was down, and the full moon was up, and a beautiful moon it was. And then there came down that wonderful hush that sometimes falls over the African bush in the early hours of the night. No beast was moving, and no bird called. Not a breath of air stirred the quiet trees, and

the shadows did not even quiver; they only grew. It was very oppressive and very lonely, for there was not a sign of the cattle or the boys. I was quite thankful for the society of old Kaptein, who was lying down contentedly against the disselboom, chewing the cud with a good conscience.

"Presently, however, Kaptein began to get restless. First he snorted, then he got up and and snorted again. I could not make it out, so like a fool I got down off the wagon-box to have a look round, thinking it might be the lost oxen coming.

"Next instant I regretted it, for all of a sudden I heard an awful roar and saw something yellow flash past me and light on poor Kaptein. Then came a bellow of agony from the ox, and a crunch as the lion put his teeth through the poor brute's neck, and I began to realize what had happened. My rifle was in the wagon, and my first thought was to get hold of it, and I turned and made a bolt for it. I got my foot on the wheel and flung my body forward on to the wagon, and there I stopped as if I were frozen, and no wonder, for as I was about to spring up I heard the lion behind me, and next second I felt the brute, ay, as plainly as I can feel this table. I felt him, I say, sniffing at my left leg that was hanging down.

"My word! I did feel queer; I don't think that I ever felt so queer before. I dared not move for the life of me, and the odd thing was that I seemed to lose power over my leg, which had an insane sort of inclination to kick out of its own mere motion—just as hysterical people want to laugh when they ought to be particularly solemn. Well, the lion sniffed and sniffed, beginning at my ankle and slowly nosing away up to my thigh. I thought that he was going to get hold then, but he did not. He only growled softly, and went back to the ox. Shifting my head a little I got a full view of him. He was the biggest lion I ever saw, and I have seen a great many, and he had a most tremendous black mane. What his teeth were like you can see—

look there, pretty big ones, ain't they? Altogether he was a magnificent animal, and as I lay there sprawling on the fore-tongue of the wagon, it occurred to me that he would look uncommonly well in a cage. He stood there by the carcass of poor Kaptein, and deliberately disembowelled him as neatly as a butcher could have done. All this while I dared not move, for he kept lifting his head and keeping an eye on me as he lifted his bloody chops. When he had cleaned Kaptein out, he opened his mouth and roared, and I am not exaggerating when I say that the sound shook the wagon. Instantly there came back an answering roar.

"'Heavens!' I thought, 'there is his mate!'

"Hardly was the thought out of my head when I caught sight in the moonlight of the lioness bounding along through the long grass, and after her a couple of cubs about the size of mastiffs. She stopped within a few feet of my head, and stood, and waved her tail, and fixed me with her glowing yellow eyes; but just as I thought that all was over, she turned, and began to feed on Kaptein, and so did the cubs. There were the four of them within eight feet of me, growling and quarrelling, rending and tearing and crunching poor Kaptein's bones; and there I lay, shaking with terror, and the cold perspiration pouring out of me, feeling like another Daniel come to judgment, in a new sense of the phrase. Presently the cubs had eaten their fill, and began to get restless. One went round to the back of the wagon and pulled at the Impala buck that hung there, and the other came round my way and began the sniffing game at my leg. Indeed, he did more than that, for, my trousers being hitched up a little, he began to lick the bare skin with his rough tongue. The more he licked, the more he liked it, to judge from his increased vigor and the loud purring noise he made. Then I knew that the end had come, for in another second his file-like tongue would have rasped through the skin of my leg—which was luckily pretty tough—and have got to the blood, and then there would be no

chance for me. So I just lay there and thought of my sins, and prayed to the Almighty, and thought that, after all, life was a very enjoyable thing.

"And then all of a sudden I heard a crashing of bushes, and the shouting and whistling of men, and there were the two boys coming back with the cattle which they had found trekking along all together. The lions lifted their heads and listened, and then without a sound bounded off—and I fainted.

"The lions came back no more that night, and by the next morning my nerves had got pretty straight again; but I was full of wrath when I thought of all that I had gone through at the hands, or rather noses, of those four lions, and of the fate of my after ox Kaptein. He was a splendid ox, and I was very fond of him. So wroth was I that, like a fool, I determined to go for the whole family of them. It was worthy of a greenhorn out on his first hunting trip; but I did it, nevertheless. Accordingly, after breakfast, having rubbed some oil upon my leg, which was very sore from the cub's tongue, I took the driver, Tom, who did not half like the job, and having armed myself with an ordinary double No. 12 smoothbore, the first breechloader I ever had, I started. I took the smoothbore because it shot a bullet very well; and my experience has been that a round ball from a smoothbore is quite as effective against a lion as an express bullet. The lion is soft, and not a difficult animal to finish if you hit him anywhere in the body. A buck takes far more killing.

"Well, I started, and the first thing I set to work to do was to try to make out whereabouts the brutes lay up for the day. About three hundred yards from the wagon was the crest of a rise covered with single mimosa trees, dotted about in a park-like fashion, and beyond this was a stretch of open plain running down to a dry pan, or water-hole, which covered about an acre of ground, and was densely clothed with reeds, now in the sere and yellow leaf. From the further edge of this pan the ground sloped up again to a great cleft, or nullah, which had been cut out by the action

of water, and was pretty thickly sprinkled with bush, among which grew some large trees, I forget of what sort.

"It at once struck me that the dry pan would be a likely place to find my friends in, as there is nothing a lion is fonder of than lying up in reeds, through which he can see things without being seen himself. Accordingly thither I went and prospected. Before I had got half-way round the pan I found the remains of a blue vilderbeeste that had evidently been killed within the last three or four days and partially devoured by lions; and from other indications about I was soon assured that, if the family were not in the pan that day, they spent a good deal of their spare time there. But if there, the question was how to get them out; for it was clearly impossible to think of going in after them unless one was quite determined to commit suicide. Now, there was a strong wind blowing from the direction of the wagon, across the reedy pan toward the bush-clad kloof or donga, and this first gave me the idea of firing the reeds, which, as I think I told you, were pretty dry. Accordingly, Tom took some matches and began starting little fires to the left, and I did the same to the right. But the reeds were still green at the bottom, and we should never have got them well alight had it not been for the wind, which got stronger and stronger as the sun got higher, and forced the fire into them. At last, after half an hour's trouble, the flame got a hold, and began to spread out like a fan, whereupon I got round to the further side of the pan to wait for the lions, standing well out in the open, as we stood at the copse to-day where you shot the woodcock. It was a rather risky thing to do, but I used to be so sure of my shooting in those days that I did not so much mind the risk. Scarcely had I got round when I heard the reeds parting before the onward rush of some animal. 'Now for it,' said I. On it came. I could see that it was yellow, and prepared for action, when, instead of a lion, out bounded a beautiful reit-bok which had been lying in the shelter of the pan. It must, by

the way, have been a reit-bok of a peculiarly confiding nature to lay itself down with the lion like the lamb of prophecy, but I suppose that the reeds were thick, and that it kept a long way off.

"Well, I let the reit-bok go, and it went like the wind, and I kept my eyes fixed upon the reeds. The fire was burning like a furnace now; the flames crackling and roaring as they bit into the reeds, sending spouts of fire twenty feet and more into the air, and making the hot air dance above it in a way that was perfectly dazzling. But the reeds were still half green, and created an enormous quantity of smoke, which came rolling toward me like a curtain, lying very low on account of the wind. Presently, above the crackling of the fire, I heard a startled roar, then another and another. So the lions were at home.

"I was beginning to get excited now, for, as you fellows know, there is nothing in experience to warm up your nerves like a lion at close quarters, unless it is a wounded buffalo; and I got still more so when I made out through the smoke that the lions were all moving about on the extreme edge of the reeds. Occasionally they would pop their heads out like rabbits from a burrow, and then, catching sight of me standing about fifty yards out, draw them back again. I knew that it must be getting pretty warm behind them, and that they could not keep the game up for long; and I was not mistaken, for suddenly all four of them broke cover together, the old black-maned lion leading by a few yards. I never saw a more splendid sight in all my hunting experience than those four lions bounding across the veldt, overshadowed by the dense pall of smoke and backed by the fiery furnace of the burning reeds.

"I reckoned that they would pass, on their road to the bushy kloof, within about five and twenty yards of me, so, taking a long breath, I got my gun well on to the lion's shoulder—the black-maned one—so as to allow for an inch or two of motion, and catch him through the heart. I was on, dead on, and my finger

was just beginning to tighten on the trigger, when suddenly I went blind—a bit of reed-ash had drifted into my right eye. I danced and rubbed, and got it more or less clear just in time to see the tail of the last lion vanishing round the bushes up the kloof.

"If ever a man was mad, I was that man. It was too bad; and such a shot in the open, too! However, I was not going to be beaten, so I just turned and marched for the kloof. Tom, the driver, begged and implored me not to go, but though as a general rule I never pretended to be very brave (which I am not), I was determined that I would either kill those lions or they should kill me. So I told Tom that he need not come unless he liked, but I was going; and being a plucky fellow, a Swazi by birth, he shrugged his shoulders, muttered that I was mad or bewitched, and followed doggedly in my tracks.

"We soon got to the kloof, which was about 300 yards in length and but sparsely wooded, and then the real fun began. There might be a lion behind every bush—there certainly were four lions somewhere; the delicate question was where. I peeped and poked and looked in every possible direction, with my heart in my mouth, and was at last rewarded by catching a glimpse of something yellow moving behind a bush. At the same moment, from another bush opposite me out burst one of the cubs and galloped back toward the burnt-out pan. I whipped round and let drive a snap shot that tipped him head over heels, breaking his back within two inches of the root of the tail, and there he lay helpless but glaring. Tom afterward killed him with his assegai. I opened the breech of the gun, and hurriedly pulled out the old case, which, to judge from what ensued, must, I suppose, have burst and left a portion of its fabric sticking to the barrel. At any rate, when I tried to get in the new case, it would only enter half-way; and—would you believe it?—this was the moment that the lioness, attracted, no doubt, by the outcry of her cub, chose to put in an appearance. There she stood, twenty paces or so from me, lashing

her tail, and looking just as wicked as it is possible to conceive. Slowly I stepped backward, trying to push in the new case, and as I did so, she moved on in little runs, dropping down after each run. The danger was imminent, and the case would not go in. At the moment I oddly enough thought of the cartridge-maker, whose name I will not mention, and earnestly hoped that, if the lion got me, some condign punishment would overtake him. It would not go in, so I tried to pull it out. It would not come out, either, and my gun was useless if I could not shut it to use the other barrel. I might as well have had no gun. Meanwhile I was walking backward, keeping my eye on the lioness, who was creeping forward on her belly without a sound, but lashing her tail and keeping her eye on me; and in it I saw that she was coming in a few seconds more. I dashed my wrist and the palm of my hand against the brass rim of the cartridge till the blood poured from them—look, there are the scars of it to this day!"

Here Quatermain held up his right hand to the light, and showed us seven or eight white cicatrices just where the wrist is set into the hand.

"But it was not of the slightest use," he went on; "the cartridge would not move. I only hope that no other man will ever be put in such an awful position. The lioness gathered herself together, and I gave myself up for lost, when suddenly Tom shouted out from somewhere in my rear:

"'You are walking on to the wounded cub; turn to the right.'

"I had the sense, dazed as I was, to take the hint, and slewing round at right-angles, but still keeping my eyes on the lioness, I continued my backward walk.

"To my intense relief, with a low growl she straightened herself, turned, and bounded off further up the kloof.

"'Come on, Inkoos,' said Tom, 'let's get back to the wagon.'

"All right, Tom,' I answered. 'I will when I have killed those three other lions,' for by this time I was bent

on shooting them as I never remember being bent on anything before or since. 'You can go if you like, or you can get up a tree.'

"He considered the position a little, and then he very wisely got up a tree. I wish that I had done the same.

"Meanwhile I had got out my knife, which had an extractor in it, and succeeded after some difficulty in hauling out the case which had so nearly been the cause of my death, and removing the obstruction in the barrel. It was very little thicker than a postage-stamp; certainly not thicker than a piece of writing-paper. This done, I loaded the gun, bound my handkerchief round my wrist and hand to stanch the flowing of the blood, and started on again.

"I had noticed that the lioness went into a thick green bush, or rather cluster of bushes, growing near the water, for there was a little stream running down the kloof, about fifty yards higher up, and for this I made. When I got there, however, I could see nothing, so I took up a big stone and threw it into the bushes. I believe that it hit the other cub, for out it came with a rush, giving me a broadside shot, of which I promptly availed myself, knocking it over dead. Out, too, came the lioness like a flash of light, but quick as she went, I managed to put the other bullet into her ribs, so that she rolled right over three times like a shot rabbit. I instantly got two more cartridges into the gun, and as I did so, the lioness got up again and came crawling toward me on her fore-paws, roaring and groaning, and with such an expression of diabolical fury on her countenance as I have not often seen. I shot her again through the chest, and she fell over on to her side quite dead.

"That was the first and last time that I ever killed a brace of lions right and left, and, what is more, I never heard of anybody else doing it. Naturally I was considerably pleased with myself, and having again loaded up, went on to look for the black-maned beauty which had killed Kaptein. Slowly and with the greatest care I proceeded up the kloof, searching every bush and tuft of grass as I went. It was wonderfully exciting work,

for I never was sure from one moment to another but that he would be on me. I took comfort, however, from the reflection that a lion rarely attacks a man—rarely, I say; sometimes he does, as you will see—unless he is cornered or wounded. I must have been nearly an hour hunting after the lion. Once I thought I saw something move in a clump of tambouki grass, but I could not be sure, and when I trod out the grass I could not find him.

"At last I got up to the head of the kloof, which made a *cul-de-sac*. It was formed of a wall of rock about fifty feet high. Down this rock trickled a little waterfall, and in front of it, some seventy feet from its face, was a great piled-up mass of bowlders, in the crevices and on the top of which grew ferns and grass and stunted bushes. This mass was about twenty-five feet high. The sides of the kloof here were also very steep. Well, I got up to the top of the nullah and looked all round. No signs of the lion. Evidently I had either overlooked him further down, or he had escaped right away. It was very vexatious; but still three lions were not a bad bag for one gun before dinner, and I was fain to be content. Accordingly I departed back again, making my way round the isolated pillar of bowlders, and beginning to feel that I was pretty well done up with excitement and fatigue, and should be more so before I had skinned those three lions. When I had got, as nearly as I could judge, about eighteen yards past the pillar or mass of bowlders, I turned to have another look round. I have a pretty sharp eye but I could see nothing at all.

"Then, on a sudden, I saw something sufficiently alarming. On the top of the mass of bowlders opposite to me, standing out clear against the rock beyond, was the huge black-maned lion. He had been crouching there, and now arose as though by magic. There he stood lashing his tail, just like a statue of the animal on the gateway of Northumberland House that I have seen a picture of. But he did not stand long. Before I could fire—before I could do more than get the gun

to my shoulder—he sprang straight up and out from the rock, and driven by the impetus of that one mighty bound came hurtling through the air toward me.

"Heavens! how grand he looked, and how awful! High into the air he flew, describing a great arc. Just as he touched the highest point of his spring I fired. I did not dare to wait, for I saw that he would clear the whole space and land right upon me. Without a sight, almost without aim, I fired as one would fire a snap shot at snipe. The bullet told, for I distinctly heard its thud above the rushing sound caused by the passage of the lion through the air. Next second I was swept to the ground (luckily I fell into a low creeper-clad bush, which broke the shock), and the lion was on the top of me, and the next those great white teeth of his had met in my thigh—I heard them grate against the bone. I yelled out in agony, for I did not feel in the least benumbed and happy, like Dr. Livingstone—whom, by the way, I knew very well—and gave myself up for dead. But suddenly, as I did so, the lion's grip on my thigh loosened, and he stood over me, swaying to and fro, his huge mouth, from which the blood was gushing, wide opened. Then he roared, and the sound shook the rocks.

"To and fro he swung, and suddenly the great head dropped on me, knocking all the breath from my body, and he was dead. My bullet had entered in the centre of his chest and passed out on the right side of the spine about half-way down the back.

"The pain of my wound kept me from fainting, and, as soon as I got my breath, I managed to drag myself from under him. Thank heavens, his great teeth had not crushed my thigh bone; but I was losing a great deal of blood, and had it not been for the timely arrival of Tom, with whose aid I got the handkerchief off my wrist and tied it round my leg, twisting it tight with a stick, I think I should have bled to death.

"Well, it was a just reward for my folly in trying to tackle a family of lions single-handed. The odds were too long. I have been lame ever since, and shall be till

my dying day; in the month of March the wound always troubles me a great deal, and every three years it breaks out raw. I need scarcely add that I never traded the lot of ivory at Sikúkuni's. Another man got it—a German—and made £500 out of it after paying expenses. I spent the next month on the broad of my back, and was a cripple for six months after that. And now I've told you the yarn, so I will have a drop of Hollands and go to bed."

Yes, she was a flirt. Having little else to flirt with but clergymen, she naturally felt compelled to spend her winning smiles upon them, but it is doubtful whether she really intended any harm. The history of her conquests was first related in *All the Year Round.*

THE LILY OF SWEET ANCOTT.

PART I.

"MARY said you wanted me, uncle."

"Oh, yes; I sent her. Wait a moment, child. I must verify this before I close the book. His references are really most untrustworthy."

Lily climbed up, without saying a word, to the highest step of a library ladder which was near her, and having settled herself there, with an impatient twist of her little figure, she took a bit of string from her pocket and began to make various string puzzles.

The study was very dark, partly from a large guelder rose tree which overshadowed the window, and partly because it was lined with books, the leather bindings of which, dulled with years and use, were darker in their general effect than the heaviest of oak wainscoting; and Lily made a curious, fascinating picture, as she sat there, in her light cotton frock, with a background of old brown commentaries on long-forgotten theological works to show up her small oval face, which was delicately colored, under its brown tint, with a bright flush, and framed by a kind of rough aureole of very curly golden-brown hair—hair which was one of Lily's trials. It would not grow longer than a boy's, and it was altogether wrong with her complexion.

In the solitude of her chamber she had once thought vaguely and darkly of such wicked vanities as dyes. However, frightened at the irrevocableness of the step should she yield to that particular vanity, she went no

further. Fortunately, for Lily was lovely. All the more lovely for the irregularity of her coloring.

She had come to the end of all available games with the string, when her uncle's voice made her look up, or, rather, look down at him, quickly. But he was not speaking to her, not thinking of her.

"Ah," he said, eagerly, "as I thought—wrong, quite wrong. He never should have undertaken an annotated edition like this. Some of his things are good—that pamphlet on the meters of Horace showed considerable clear-headedness—but these notes are far too slight and cursory, and the references are faulty. I must call public attention to their defects; a work like mine is greatly hindered by——"

Lily's string, rolled into a tiny ball, slipped from her fingers, as she gave it a final toss, and alighted on her uncle's writing-table. Lily's foot gave a short, impatient tap on the ladder.

"Dear me! What is that noise? And what is this? String! String! Most extraordinary! I don't understand it."

The Vicar's dim, short-sighted eyes peered about him, and suddenly fell on the incongruous spot of light in his dark little study, and its still more incongruous position.

"Lily! What on earth are you doing there? Oh, yes, yes, I remember. You are waiting, of course. Come down, child, come down, and find my glasses. And where did I put that letter? Oh, here they both are. Lily, this came this morning."

Lily was standing in front of her uncle's writing-table now, with her hands behind her like a child saying a lesson, and a mischievous look in her eyes, which rested for a moment on the letter. She did not say a word to break the pause he made, and he went on again, rather slowly:

"It is the third letter of the kind I have had to answer since you came to me—the third within two months. It really becomes both embarrassing and annoying. Such a serious waste of my time, too. Who is this

Mr. Mason? Where have you met him? But sit down; I wish to read you the contents of his letter."

"Oh, uncle, don't mind about that," Lily interposed, with a little twist of the corners of her mouth, which gave her face a curious expression, composed of a longing to laugh and a faint suggestion of consternation.

Mr. Heathcote put on his glasses, unfolded the letter very slowly, and began:

"DEAR SIR:—I write to ask you to allow me to call upon you, with a view to my obtaining your consent to my paying my addresses to your niece, Miss Heathcote. I venture to think I am not wholly indifferent to her, and she has it in her power to make me the happiest of men. If you would be good enough to appoint any day and hour at which it would be convenient for you to see me, I can, I believe, lay before you satisfactory details as to income, &c. Faithfully yours, G. H. MASON."

There was perfect silence in the little dark room when Mr. Heathcote finished. He himself was thinking what to say to Lily. It was so difficult to impress young minds, he found. But his thoughts were all scattered to the winds by a low laugh from the possessor of this particular young mind.

"Uncle, it's so ridiculous of the man," she said, at last. "I only—just talked to him."

"State your facts more clearly, Lily. I repeat my question. Where did you meet him?"

"Oh, he is Emily's cousin. I saw him at Ilfracombe last week, you know."

"You seem to have seen a good deal of him—to have encouraged him to hope, to say the least, Lily."

"I—oh—he wasn't quite so dull as every one else there, that's all, and I—of course, I—was glad: they're so stupid, there. He was rather nice; he got my hat one day when it went into the sea. It was my best one, and I was pleased with him, and I just—said so. Oh, how silly men are!"

"Lily, keep to the point. You wish me to tell this Mr. Mason——"

"That he is most foolish, uncle. As if one could care for a man like that! I've no patience with men."

The Vicar peered above his glasses at his niece's face with a very puzzled expression on his own.

"Well, well," he said at last. "I don't understand young people of the present day. In my youth—not that I have any practical experience of my own to argue from—but, when I was young, I feel sure no man would have addressed such a letter to a young lady's guardian unless she had given him very sufficient reason. And I cannot believe that you, Lily, could in that short space of time give a sufficient reason to three men. For that is what it amounts to. In May only it was, surely, that I received that letter from Dr. Wilson—excellent young man—then, Lily, Lily, what are you doing?"

"I know just exactly what you're going to say, uncle, and I'm going."

She shut the door after her with such a jerk that several engravings absolutely shook in their places.

"All dear James's impetuous ways!" sighed the Vicar to himself. "I wish she had waited a moment, though. I do not recall the young man I intended to refer to, and yet I know there was another. Oh, yes; asked me to give him a curacy. Ridiculous! How could I displace Smith or Maynard? Said he liked the place so much, should like to work under me, and then wrote about Lily. Hardly so sincere as he seemed, I fear, poor fellow! Really, Lily is a great charge. I had no idea of all this when I promised poor James that she should live here when she left school—not that I should have hesitated, but it is certainly both anxious and disturbing. I shall not finish that paragraph before I go to the school. Dear me, no; it is twenty minutes to three now, and I must write to this Mr. Mason before I go out. This is really a terrible waste of my time."

The Vicar set aside his cherished work—a "Commentary on the Fathers, with an Appendix on Gregory of Nyssa"—made his words to the injured Mr. Mason

as gentle as possible, placed the letter in his capacious pocket, and five minutes later transferred it to the village post office, which, in the parish of Sweet Ancott, was a tiny opening in the outside wall of the building containing the village shop, an opening so garlanded and surrounded by roses and honeysuckle, that it was absolutely necessary to push them on one side in order to post a letter there, an act which demanded much faith on the part of strangers, who found it difficult to believe that letters so posted ever reached any less rustic and poetic destination.

Then he went on his way; it was nearly six o'clock before he came within sight of his own gates.

He had just reached them when he saw before him one of his young-woman parishioners. They were a trial even greater than the school. Their curtseys had grown small by degrees and beautifully less, till they curtseyed no longer, but bowed to him with an inclination so dignified that the good man did not always recognize the girls he had held in his arms in their infancy, and more than once had taken off his hat to them—or their dresses. Their dresses were another grief to him in their brilliant hues, arranged in the latest fashion, or what was understood as such by the time that mysterious entity had found its way from its birthplace to Sweet Ancott.

To this particular girl he had given many a word of fatherly exhortation on the subject of dress, but his words had, apparently, not sunk deep into the heart of Jennie Brown, whose garments at that moment were wonderful and startling indeed.

Tenderly, wisely, and gently, he flattered himself, he approached his subject now. Jennie was certainly growing impressed by his theories of what quiet, womanly dress and behavior should be, when, suddenly, the Vicar felt that he had lost her attention completely, and, looking up, saw before him, walking toward home with short, rapid steps, Lily—Lily, clad in the brightest of scarlet cotton gowns, her hat set on the back of her rough, tossed hair, her fishing-rod over her shoulder,

and beside her, struggling with the weight of a heavy basket of trout, the junior curate, Mr. Maynard, untidy, disheveled, his soft felt hat dented all over, and his hands very dirty from winding up Lily's line.

Jennie Brown departed abruptly. Lily seized the Vicar's arm with both her hands and exclaimed:

"Oh, uncle, don't you want some trout for supper? Mr. Maynard caught only two of these, I caught the rest, and they're beauties. He's coming to supper, too."

"I doubt if Mr. Maynard has time," said the Vicar in a mild, but distinctly crushing manner: "the library opens at seven, and I think Mr. Smith is at Esdale."

Mr. Maynard looked rather more disheveled, more dented, more untidy, and said in a subdued voice:

"Certainly, sir; I am going to the library at once. Good-night, Miss Heathcote."

Lily seized the basket of trout and flew into the house. The Vicar followed slowly, perplexed, anxious, wondering. Maynard—Maynard, who had been so hard-working, so energetic in the parish always—Maynard wasting a whole afternoon like this!

Mr. Heathcote began to think of it all carefully. Every day, on his return from the school, he usually met Mr. Smith or Mr. Maynard in the village engaged in some sort of parish business. But now he remembered slowly that he had very seldom done so lately; and though he had, of course, seen them in their places in church and at meetings, he had seen little of either of them incidentally for weeks past. And he had himself, two days before, paid a pastoral visit to the distant outlying hamlets of his parish. He had thought of her words as chronic discontent when a very grumbling denizen of these regions had told him: "We ain't seen none of the parsons here lately." But now, as he remembered, he thought they might be true.

Dimly these and one or two other smaller details began to dawn on the Vicar; dimly and faintly he began to perceive that this diminution of energy had occurred only since Easter—that, in fact, it coincided more or less with Lily's arrival at Sweet Ancott in April.

The good man's head went round at this discovery, and he stood quite still in the middle of his gravel drive to try and think it over.

If he had thought of Lily at all when he was not actually with her, he had thought of her vaguely as sewing, playing the piano, or as doing "something women do," said he to himself almost piteously. "But apparently she has been making mischief everywhere. Only to-day—only to-day I wrote to tell that unfortunate man that her careless thoughtlessness had led him into a mistake! And now, here is Maynard's time wasted, and his head turned, probably. Smith's too, for all I know. Well, certainly, this won't do. I must speak to Lily very seriously—far more seriously than I have ever yet been called upon to speak to her of anything."

With this resolve fresh in his mind the Vicar hastily extricated his stick from the hole in the gravel into which he had inserted it in his agitation of mind, and went on his way to the drawing room, thinking vaguely that at any rate that was the spot in which he ought to seek Lily.

She was there. She had taken her spoils to the kitchen, and was sitting peacefully on the broad window sill behind the curtain, reading.

"Lily, my dear child," began the Vicar very solemnly, from the further end of the room.

There was no answer. He came a few steps further, and went on:

"Lily, give me your careful attention for a few moments. Lay your book aside. I wish to speak to you on a grave matter. I cannot express to you my feelings when I discovered just now that Mr. Maynard's time had been wasted thus. Before I go further I must really request that you never accompany him——"

"He accompanied me," Lily put in.

"That you do not go out with him again. Setting aside the waste of time, it is altogether unseemly that you should do so. I must ask for your promise, Lily, that this does not occur again."

There was no answer.

"Lily!" the Vicar repeated; but still she did not speak. There was a slight movement somewhere; but no words came. The Vicar waited an instant, then he walked up to the window, and pulled the curtain aside. No Lily was there. Down on the lawn below stood a small scarlet figure, panting with the tump down, and holding up a laughing face. After one or two gasps for breath, Lily said, looking up at him saucily:

"I don't want to waste your time, uncle, in talking; but it's no good for me to promise. I might want Mr. Maynard, again, you know. He's very strong, and carries the basket much better than Harry Blake."

With that the scarlet figure raced down the lawn and out of sight. The poor Vicar turned back into the drawing room utterly at a loss—except for one resolve, which took the clearest and most determined form in his mind, namely, that he would find for both curates plenty of work through all the next day, and for many a day to come.

With that end in view he sallied forth early next morning, and having laid his commands on Mr. Maynard, and, indeed, seen him start for the furthest houses in the furthest hamlets to look up truant children, he then proceeded to the dwelling of Mr. Smith, for whom he had arranged an equally engrossing mission. He knocked for some time at the door without receiving any answer, and when the landlady at last appeared, all the information he could gain from her was that Mr. Smith was "out."

"Went out at half-past ten, and never said nothing about his dinner," concluded the much-injured woman.

It is always dangerous to judge from appearances; but to do so in her case would inevitably have led to the inference that it was almost a farce for Mr. Smith to mention the meal in question, so incapable did she look of thinking of dinner, much less of cooking it.

The Vicar ignored that delinquency on the part of his curate, and simply said that he would go up to Mr. Smith's room and write him a note. He ascended the narrow stairs, and opened the door of that sanctum.

From the mass of litter, clerical and otherwise, upon the table he extricated writing materials and sat down.

Something fell out of the blotting case as he opened it, something that fluttered to the ground. He picked it up. It was a note in a small, square envelope.

Surely he knew the dashing handwriting, which nearly covered the limited surface; the enormous capital R. of Reverend was familiar enough. It was—yes, it was, indeed, a note from Lily to Mr. Smith.

The Vicar looked aghast, indeed, as he laid it down on the table. Decidedly, he had not taken the matter in hand a day too soon. Taking up a pen, he wrote his note quickly, making it shorter, sterner, and more peremptory than any note from him to his curate had ever been before. Fastening it up he laid it in a conspicuous position on the closed blotting-case, and then turned round to see what time it was by the mantelpiece clock before he rose to go. But there was something propped up against it so that he could only see the minute-hand—some dark object or other. He got up and went toward the mantelpiece to remove it; but not until he actually stretched out his hand to take it did his short-sighted eyes see what it was. Then he saw too clearly, too well. It was a photograph of Lily—Lily herself! The same that graced his own drawing-room table!

"Bless my soul!" cried the agitated Vicar; "can she have given it him? What are things coming to? To think—to think that I never dreamt of this! I must hurry out and look for Smith at once. He must be somewhere. And then—but, dear me, dear me! what can I say to Lily?"

But Smith was apparently nowhere. Every haunt the Vicar tried knew him not. Not even the aid of various zealous urchins, only too willing to help "Muster Heathcote find the tall 'un," as Mr. Smith was familiarly known, could produce him.

With a vexatious sense of failure and worry the Vicar was fain, at twenty minutes to one, to seek his own mansion for luncheon. As he strolled, hot and tired,

up the drive, a faint sound of voices fell on his ear from the thicket of rhododendrons on his right. Voices, no; it was one voice—a rather monotonous one. Mr. Heathcote stood still for a moment to listen. Then he pushed aside the rhododendrons hastily and went through. Half-a-dozen paces brought him to two great ash trees. They were very thick, and a tiny murmuring brook ran close beside them, making that part of the garden cool even on the hottest days. But the sight that met the Vicar's eyes at this moment took away from him all thought of cool, rest, or calm.

In her hammock between the two ash trees, swinging slowly, lay Lily; on a low branch of one of the trees sat Mr. Smith, reading aloud. Between them was a table with tumblers and lemon squash.

Both became aware of the Vicar's presence at the same instant. Mr. Smith started and let his book fall.

Lily looked up and said, slowly:

"Why, uncle, how hot you are! Why don't you come and sit here? Mr. Smith is reading me the 'Children of Gibeon.' It's much too hot to read myself, and it's good practice for him. I think he reads very badly in church, don't you? I've told him so—Oh, is it lunch-time?" as the Vicar said, with a sort of gasp:

"Smith, there's a note at your rooms from me; Lily, it is one o'clock!" and strode indoors forthwith.

PART II.

Lily was "setting her room tidy." This process often took place, and was extremely simple. It consisted in turning out on the floor the contents of every drawer and box she possessed, contemplating the heap thus made from every possible point of view, and then thrusting the component parts back into their respective receptacles in a confusion slightly increased by their temporary sojourn elsewhere.

Lily possessed no jewel-case. If she had, it would assuredly never have contained its lawful contents, for she threw each and any of her trinkets into the nearest

drawer or box when she had done wearing it, and never thought of it till she wanted it again. So, mixed with ribbons, laces, and so forth, her brooches, necklaces, and bangles at this moment strewed the floor. She picked up one after another idly, and put them down again quickly. Suddenly she gave a pleased exclamation.

"What ages since I saw that!" she said. "Who would have thought of its being twisted in that lace?" and her fingers hastily disentangled a little, delicate gold bangle. "When did I have it last?" she went on musingly. "Oh, I remember. I don't believe I've ever seen it since last Summer, not since I was at Farnborough. At Mrs. Rose's garden-affair I wore it. I remember—I remember, quite."

Lily turned the tiny thing over and over slowly, but she was not looking at it. Her eyes were fixed on the bit of bright blue Summer sky she could see through the low window, but they grew graver and softer somehow. The wild, mischief-loving light died out of them. Suddenly Lily hid her face on her knees, and the bangle slipped unheeded to the floor. It was a long while ago since that garden-party; but she remembered it well, very well. She had lost that bangle in an excited set at tennis. Who was it who had looked for it and brought it to her? Lily pressed her face lower and lower on to her knees; but she saw, far more distinctly than she had seen the blue sky, a tall, upright figure, a pair of keen eyes in a dark, resolute face; a face which she knew had worn a very different look for her from that which it bore for any one else. But no—and Lily shook herself indignantly—no. It must be her fancy; it was only fancy; he had never cared for her; he would have come and told her so, surely, if it had been true; but he had made her think so, he had, indeed. Then Lily's face turned a brighter crimson in its hiding-place. What was she thinking of? The head-master of a great public school had other things to think of than a little girl whom he had met by chance when she was staying with one of his house-

masters. Then he knew so many people, nice people, nice girls; and they all liked him, every one did. Perhaps he was married by now to one of them. Most likely, Lily thought, with a curious aching feeling; but she wished she knew. She thought how foolish she had been not to write to Mrs. Rose more often, to keep up a correspondence which would at least remind her of that happy Summer visit, and tell her what every one was doing at Farnborough. Every one? No; only what one person was doing.

All at once Lily jumped up from the floor and unlocked a small drawer in a queer little tiny cabinet, the contents of which had not shared in the common earthquake. But when she had unlocked it, she took out what she wanted rather slowly. It was a photograph—a group of all the masters at Farnborough, including Mr. Rose. It was not to look at Mr. Rose, however, that Lily had taken it from its place. Her eyes were fixed on the tall, thin figure which stood behind all the others, leaning one firm hand on the shoulder of the man who stood nearest to him, but looking—or she fancied so—rather lonely. She looked, and looked, and her face grew graver and graver—it altered into a face that Mr. Smith and Mr. Maynard had never seen.

Suddenly the tea-bell rang. Lily glanced incredulously at her little American time-piece; but it was indeed five o'clock. She put her photograph away carefully, first; then with both arms seized the heap on the floor, forced into three drawers the contents of six, and rushed down-stairs to make tea.

Mr. Heathcote's afternoon had been troubled, indeed, and it was followed by a nearly sleepless night He could think of no satisfactory way of arranging matters, and the next morning came without his having arrived at any conclusion whatever. He had thought of sending Lily away; but he dismissed that thought almost without consideration; he could not turn his brother's child from the only home she had; this was not to be thought of under any circumstances. His second impulse was,

naturally, to dismiss Smith and Maynard. But a little reflection showed him that this course was almost as impracticable as the other. Mr. Smith and Mr. Maynard would most assuredly refuse to leave Sweet Ancott without some really well-founded reason; and what could he give them? He could not simply say that they were idle; he could not say that they ran after his niece; neither of these reasons, cogent as they were in practice, was solid enough in theory to justify him in taking a step which would injure both men in their future career as lights—or otherwise—of the Church.

All these arguments went through the Vicar's mind, again and again, in the same hopeless, inconsequent way.

Finally, next morning, after a still more abstracted and silent breakfast time, he decided to dismiss the whole subject from his thoughts and to seek some rest and peace in reverting to Gregory of Nyssa.

He sought the calm of his study, and in the course of his first half-hour's study made an important discovery of a hitherto unremarked incident in the early career of that father. He was triumphantly proceeding to condense this invaluable information into two neat paragraphs—he had completely forgotten the existence of such modern subjects of interest as Lily or his curates —when his first sentence was scattered to the winds by a hasty, not to say rampant, knock at his study door, followed by the instant appearance of the parish clerk, John Griffiths. He was old, and at this moment breathless, and his words came in gasps:

"Will you—excuse me being so hasty, sir—but will you come along to the church and marry that there couple, Lucy Brown and them? They've been waiting most an hour, and I can't get no one else. I'll tell you, sir—afterwards—excuse me a-hurryin' of you, but they're that nasty about being kep' waiting."

The Vicar grasped only the bare fact that he was wanted at the church. Seizing his hat and coat, he meekly followed his impatient henchman across the field which separated his house from the church, donned

his surplice, and began the service mechanically, went through it in a bewildered way, and finally, having bidden the rosy, laughing girl who was the bride to "be not afraid with any amazement," and superintended the efforts at penmanship with which she and her new-made lord graced the register, he sat down in the vestry chair to think over things, with the old clerk to help him, while she was escorted into the Summer morning air and wedded life.

John Griffiths, after years of service, considered himself, and wished the parish to consider him, as the active partner in the ecclesiastical concern which embraced the Vicar as its useful but unimportant member. As to the curates, they were his thorn in the flesh. He disobeyed their orders on every possible occasion, gave them, in their presence, most grudging deference, and, among his associates in the village, invariably referred to them in their absence as "them boys." This morning he was thoroughly happy. He had a flagrant case of defection on their part to bring before their master, and he meant to impart the details with all impressive care and deliberation.

"I was a-settin' on the bench in my back garden," he began, as he took the Vicar's surplice from his shoulders and hung it on the old pegs which had held surplices for at least three hundred years—

"I was a-settin' in the sun, when my missus says to me, 'John,' she says, 'that there couple's gone along. I see them from the window. You go on up to church, or you'll be late.' But they was so early like I didn't hurry for all she said, and when I got there it was ten minutes to eleven still. So I waited and they waited till it had gone eleven. Then I went to the gate to look for Mr. Maynard, knowin' as how you said a Sunday as he was to marry them——"

"And he perfectly understood me," put in the Vicar.

"But I couldn't see him; and I went back and waited a bit by the door. It was near half-past eleven when the young man as was to be married came to ask me if no one weren't coming to do it. So I went along to

fetch Mr. Maynard; but he weren't at home. So then I went up to Mr. Smith's, thinking he might be there; or, if he weren't, I could tell t'other to come along. But they wasn't there— Yes, sir, I'll see to them pens, sir," as the Vicar made an impatient sound over the copying of the certificates, which was set down by his clerk to shortcomings for which he himself was greatly responsible, having used the pens the day before in oiling a refractory lock. "Well, sir, as I was a-saying, they wasn't there, and Mrs. Brown, she says to me—never could abear that woman—she says: 'Go and tell your master to look arter 'em,' she says. 'Mr. Smith, he went out with Miss Heathcote at ten o'clock, to Friar's Dell; so I heard her say when she was waitin' in the road. And Mr. Maynard, he come along here askin' for Mr. Smith, and when I told him where he was, he just cut and run after 'em like mad. That's where they are, both on 'em; and if you want 'em, I'm sorry for you.' So I came my ways, and never said good morning nor nothink to her, never could abide her imperence, and I fetched you, sir, so it's all right as far as the couple's concerned."

The old clerk turned round from fumbling with the surplices and cassocks, and met the Vicar's face. The look he saw there apparently changed the current of his thoughts, for the old man began hastily to plead for his enemies.

"Bless you, sir, they ain't nothink but two boys, and not much at that. I wouldn't worrit myself so much; we was young once; and Miss Lily—well, begging your pardon, sir, I never seed nothink so pretty for a girl."

"Good morning, John," was all the answer the Vicar gave to him; he was absently looking for his hat and stick.

Friar's Dell was a tiny copse, about three miles out of Sweet Ancott. It was covered in Summer with the rarest and loveliest ferns in the whole of Devon, it was said.

The Vicar remembered, with a groan, that Lily had

said a few days since at tea time that she meant to make a fernery. Little had he dreamt of all the words implied. As he stood there thinking, it suddenly occurred to him that he, too, would go to Friar's Dell; go to Friar's Dell for no ferns, no exercise, no diversion, but to meet them on their way home, and at least to say to Mr. Maynard what he thought of this—this complete oblivion of duty. Smith, too, would certainly profit by the firm, calm, verbal chastisement the Vicar felt at that moment able and even inspired to give.

So he started briskly enough, and kept up a pace which lasted quite through the first mile. Energetic action was a relief in his present state of agitation, and, step by step, moment by moment, the spoken reproof for Maynard grew more forcible and well arranged in the Vicar's mind; so much so that he felt it would settle everything, and there would be no need to have recourse to that last resort which had, in the watches of his sleepless night, suggested itself to him, namely, to consult the Bishop, who was coming in two days to Sweet Ancott to hold a confirmation. This was really unnecessary, he thought now, with a glow of satisfaction. Every man ought to be able to settle the affairs of his own parish; he of course would be able to do so.

He was strolling now in the middle of the road, gazing on the ground, as was his custom. Suddenly a kind of rushing in the air made him look up. Three figures dashed round the corner just in front and past the startled man, without looking at him, gasping as they flew. One was hatless. The hat of the second was jammed onto his eyes, and the third, a little in advance of these two, was a girl—a girl with curly hair standing out all round her hot face.

On they flew, and the girl's scarlet frock flew on in front to the bottom of the hill, where they stopped short at what was evidently a winning-post—some broken old wayside riding steps. The owner of the hat tore it off, mounted them, and, waving it in the air, said in stentorian tones—borne on the wind to the breathless

Vicar—"Three cheers for Miss Heathcote. Maynard, you didn't run fair!"

Settle things in his own parish! The Vicar sat down on the nearest stone-heap and began to count the hours to the confirmation-day. He would wait till then.

That evening, two other individuals in Sweet Ancott came to precisely the same decision. Mr. Maynard and Mr. Smith were sitting together in the rooms of the latter. They were having tea together in a fashion peculiarly their own, and much practiced by them. The teapot reposed on the fender, their cups on the mantelpiece. From time to time one or the other of them rose, grasped the teapot, walked about contemplatively for a few moments, then, suddenly finding his cup, filled it, drank thereof, and returned to his easy-chair. They had been arguing so hotly that a kind of exhaustion had reduced them to temporary silence. But it was very temporary, and Mr. Maynard broke it by saying, as he brandished the teapot in his hand:

"Well, Smith, you'll let me have the first chance with him."

"With her, do you mean, old fellow?"

"No, you know I don't mean with her. Haven't we just had that out? You're so abominably given to saying a thing fifty times. We've just decided that it is utterly impossible to tell from her manner which of us has the best chance, or if either of us has the faintest. She is always just the same to you as she is to me."

"She gave me her photograph."

"She's sent for one for me, so there. Come, this is childish. I mean to speak to him. I'm sure that to get straight with him is the thing, and if you do that first, I shan't have a chance, Smith. He's put out with me about that unlucky wedding this morning, you see."

Mr. Smith put down his teacup carefully.

"What do you say to tossing for it?" said he. "It's fair, at any rate."

"Your landlady will come up, or something."

"Not she. Come on."

"All right; but it's agreed we leave it till after Thursday any way."

"We've settled that. Here's a shilling. Heads you; tails me."

Mr. Smith proceeded to toss with a gravity befitting the occasion. The first time it came down heads; the second, tails. The third time, by some unexpected twist of Mr. Smith's hand, it fell into the fender. Instantly might be beheld the spectacle of two reverend gentlemen in clerical garb peering eagerly and intently into the ashes of a very untidy grate. Mr. Maynard rose first, in triumphant energy.

"Heads!" he exclaimed joyfully. "Friday morning I shall tackle him when the Bishop and all the confirmation is well off his mind. Friday morning! Cheer up, Smith, it might just as easily have been you. You can have your turn at him in the afternoon."

This reasoning hardly appeared to cheer Mr. Smith, who relapsed into the depths of his armchair, and did not arise from it again till his clerical brother parted from him at ten o'clock.

The confirmation day was bright and sunny, and Sweet Ancott wore a kind of refined and elevated bank-holiday air, owing chiefly to the lingering groups of friends and relations who had brought the girls and boys who stood waiting by the churchyard gate—waiting for the Bishop, who was rather late.

Ten minutes went by, and then his carriage drove into the vicarage gates, and the Bishop got out quickly. Mr. Heathcote met him at the door and took him into the dining room, which was full of clergy, who presented that ill-assorted, confused appearance inseparable from a body of men whose only similarity lies in their dress. They were rather eagerly awaiting the Bishop. He had recently been appointed, and had not yet undergone the ordeal by fire of scathing criticism, through which the clergy are wont to pass their chief shepherds. His outward appearance told them but little. The man who faced the critical roomful as if he were

unaware of any scrutiny was a man in the prime of life; young, he might have well been called, for at forty-two he looked thirty-two, and yet there was a dignity and a firmness about that tall, thin figure, and the resolute, dark face, the keen eyes, that showed that whatever, in the eyes of his clergy, the Bishop might lack in years was fully made up for in power. He came rather slowly up the long room, and stood looking keenly about him, while a long five minutes went by in the arrangement of details. Then Mr. Heathcote carried him off to robe.

On their return from the church they reassembled in the rectory dining-room, where, as they drank their coffee, one after another of his flock sought the Bishop's pastoral aid. These moments are jealously seized and eagerly used by vicars with refractory schoolmasters, impending school-boards, obstructive church-wardens, and all the thousand-and-one hitches which occur in ecclesiastical machinery, and which, by virtue of his office, apparently, the Bishop must put right with a touch. But their diocesan won no golden opinions from his clergy on this his first public appearance in his diocese. He listened, but he listened absently to the many stories which came before him. He manifestly gazed, during their recital, at some object over the reciter's shoulders. His attention was obviously elsewhere; he confused schoolmasters, church-wardens, and aggressive dissenters together in his comments in a manner which greatly injured and insulted the sufferers under each separate infliction.

One by one his flock left him, with their grievances unredressed; and most of them spent the period of their drive home in saying, with variations, to the wife, sister, cousin, or aunt who had accompanied them:

"Most unsatisfactory; quite unequal to the duties of the position! Often the way with these new appointments, though; too young, far too young, and fresh from a head-mastership. No parochial experience whatever—none."

Mr. Heathcote himself was taken aback when, the last of these ill-used mortals having departed, he said anxiously to the Bishop:

"I have several matters I should wish to talk over with your lordship, if you have half-an-hour at your disposal." And only received the answer:

"To-morrow, Mr. Heathcote, to-morrow. I am staying, as you know, at Elmfield to-night, and shall have the pleasure of calling on you to-morrow morning."

Then the Bishop turned hastily round.

"Where is Miss Heathcote?" he said. "I have not said good-bye to her."

At about five minutes before twelve on Friday morning Mr. Maynard arrived, asked for the Vicar, and was shown into the study, where Mr. Heathcote sat with a blank sheet before him. He had done no work that morning as yet. Ideas failed him; argument, even on the well-beloved theme, was beyond his power.

Mr. Maynard sat down, leaning his stick slowly and carefully against the Vicar's writing-table. During his introductory remarks on the weather the subject of his visit had rapidly divested itself of all that flowing drapery of graceful phrases in which he had clothed it during his walk thither, and while he sought for it fresh garniture of words, he paused. In the pause, the mantelpiece clock struck twelve. The same instant the doorbell rang, sounding rather loudly through the quiet house. Another moment, and Mr. Smith was shown in.

"It's afternoon, Maynard," he said, sotto voce, as he passed him. "Afternoon now. You had the morning, you know."

Mr. Maynard glared grimly, but preserved a freezing and foreboding silence.

Then, after greeting the Vicar, Mr. Smith drew up a chair on the other side of the good man. The position of the trio was sufficiently remarkable. Mr. Heathcote sat at his writing-table, facing the door, his eyes fixed mus-

ingly on the old brown volumes which were all that came within his range of vision.

Mr. Smith, who was on the right-hand side and exactly opposite the window, had the wide, sloping, sunshiny lawn and the rhododendron-thicket in the vicarage garden to assist his imagination. Mr. Maynard, at the other corner, found his horizon limited to Mr. Smith's profile, upon which he gazed without any of the attention which that interesting object demanded.

There was a silence after Mr. Smith's greeting, and the Vicar glanced, a trifle wonderingly, at his two curates.

"Mr. Heathcote," began Mr. Maynard at length, with a jerk which became a kind of twist of his whole person, when the Vicar turned his dim, inquiring gaze full on him. "I wish—to ask you—I wish to—to—marry——"

"Excuse me, sir," broke in Mr. Smith, with a contemptuous look at Mr. Maynard and a serene consciousness of his own prepared and perfect phraseology. "I am here to propose to you formally for the hand of——"

But Mr. Smith broke off all at once, got up with a suddenness that sent his chair backward to the floor, and walked to the window without saying another word.

Mr. Maynard lifted his eyes from the carpet, whence he had been trying to extract a crushing declamation, and glanced in astonishment at his fellow-worker.

Mr. Smith's expression was undergoing a rapid and remarkable series of changes. It altered from amazement to incredulity, and from incredulity to stupefaction. Mr. Maynard looked steadily at him for an instant; then being unable, even at that moment, to resist the craving of his own mind for information, rose and followed him to the window, when his own expression rapidly underwent the same process as he caught at the window-frame and gasped for breath.

The Vicar, having realized slowly that his curates, who had come to see him, were now concentrating their attention on some wholly different matter, and that

matter one in his own garden, turned round his chair, left it, and joined them. Together the three men gazed out of the window on the sloping lawn; together the three pairs of eyes met the sight before them. Coming up the grass was the tall, thin figure of the Bishop. But his lordship was not walking with his usual long, firm stride, his step was not his own rapid tread.

For one of his arms encircled a slender waist, his other was stretched out that his hand might grasp a little brown hand, and as near to his shoulder as possible, considering their respective heights, lay Lily's rough, curly head.

An instant later Mr. Maynard turned and made an exit, in the course of which the Vicar's ink, papers, and letter-weights came to one common ruin on the floor; Mr. Smith, in following him, caught in the carpet, tripped, fell prostrate, picked himself up, followed him out, and banged the door before the Vicar had realized that they had stirred. Then he suddenly opened the glass doors of the window, as if to let in more air. But it was not until Lily and the Bishop had reached the threshold that he found his voice.

"Lily!" he gasped.

"Uncle!" she responded, with a mischievous ring in her voice, a laugh in her downcast eyes, and cheeks that matched her scarlet frock. "Uncle, he was coming—to call on you. I was in the garden and he—called on me first. You see, I knew him ever so long ago—last Summer—and it only took a short call—to—to—ask me; and—you must say yes—I have."

This quaint and touching glimpse into the splendid life of the French Court of the last century is from the magical pen of Guy de Maupassant, and is translated for ROMANCE by B. M. Sherman.

IN THE LUXEMBOURG GARDENS.

"My little story is very old," said Jean Bridelle, half apologizing, "but if you would like to hear it, I will tell it to you. It is as vivid to me as though it had occurred yesterday.

"I am now fifty years old. I was young then, and I was studying law, prone to sadness, a little of a dreamer, impregnated with a melancholy philosophy. I did not care for the noisy cafés, the roystering students or the grisettes of the Quartier. I always rose early, and one of my favorite pastimes was to wander alone, about eight o'clock in the morning, in the Nursery Gardens of the Luxembourg.

"You others did not know these gardens. They were like an enchanted garden of a past century, a garden as pretty as the sweet smile of an old lady. Boxwood hedges separated the straight and narrow alleys, silent and deserted alleys, between two walls of methodically-clipped foliage. The gardener's scissors relentlessly clipped these dividing bushes, and here and there you came upon a parterre of flowers and plantations of young trees, set out like collegians on parade, magnificent groups of rose-bushes and a whole regiment of fruit-trees.

"One corner of this enchanted garden was given over to the bees. Their straw houses set at certain spaces apart, on benches, admitted the sunlight by doors about as large as a thimble, and all along the path the gilded and buzzing bees, true denizens of these silent alleys and corridors, real mistresses of this peaceful spot, flew in every direction.

"I used to go there nearly every morning; and seating myself on a bench, would read; sometimes I let my book fall on my knees, dreamily, faintly hearing the sounds of living Paris all around me, and enjoyed to its utmost the infinite repose of this remnant of an ancient régime.

"But I found that I was not the only frequenter of this spot, after the opening of the Barrières; I sometimes encountered, face to face, in the corner of a grove, a strange little old man.

"He wore shoes with silver buckles, knee-breeches, a snuff-colored redingote, a fall of lace instead of a cravat, and an indescribable gray hat, with immense brim and long hairs, which looked as though it might have been the fashion before the deluge.

"He was thin, almost to attenuation, angular, puckered and smiling. His quick, glancing eyes were never still, and his lids were contracted by a nervous twitching. He always carried a superb gold-headed cane, which must have been, from the careful way in which he handled it, a souvenir of priceless value.

"This good man astonished me at first, and then he interested me beyond measure. I watched him across the leafy wall, I followed him from afar, stopping near the flower-beds, so as not to be seen.

"And now, a strange thing happened; one morning, thinking himself unseen, he commenced to make the most singular movements; first a few little bounds; then a bow; then he threw out his slender leg and cut a light caper; then he commenced to pivot gracefully, jumping, fluttering in a queer fashion, smiling as though to an audience, bowing, throwing out his arms, twisting his poor puppet of a body, throwing to empty space tender and ridiculous kisses. He was dancing.

"I remained petrified with astonishment, asking myself, which was crazy, he or I?

"He stepped suddenly, as though to the footlights, then bowed, backing away with gracious smiles and airy kisses, which he threw to the two rows of clipped trees.

"Then he gravely continued his promenade.

"From that day, I watched him each morning go through with his indescribable gymnastics.

"A foolish desire came over me to speak to him. I risked it, and one morning meeting him face to face, I bowed to him, saying:

"'It is a beautiful day, sir."

He bowed.

"'Yes, Monsieur, it is verily a day of the olden times.'

"Eight days later we were fast friends and I knew his story. He had been ballet-master at the Opera, during the reign of Louis XV. His beautiful cane was a present from Clermont. When once started on the subject of dancing there was no stopping him.

"One day he told me the following:

"'I married La Castris, Monsieur. I will present my wife to you, if you wish, but she does not come out until later in the day. This garden is our joy and our life. It is all that remains to us of our past. It seems to us as though we could not live without it. It is old and distinguished, is it not? Here I seem to breathe an atmosphere which has not changed since the days of my youth. My wife and I pass all our afternoons here. But I come alone in the mornings, I rise so early.'

"As soon as I had finished my breakfast, I returned to the Luxembourg Gardens. Presently I preceived my old friend, who ceremoniously tendered his arm to a very small old lady, dressed in black. This was La Castris, the great dancer, beloved of the King, the favorite of Princes, the adored of that gallant reign, which seems to have left to the world an odor of love.

"We seated ourselves on one of the stone benches. It was in the month of May. The perfume of flowers permeated the air around us. A glorious sunlight glinted through the leaves and cast rays of light around us. La Castris' black dress seemed bathed in sunshine.

"The Gardens were deserted; in the distance could be heard the rumbling of vehicles, the noise of new Paris.

"'Will you explain to me,' I said to the old ballet-master, 'what the minuet really was.'

"He trembled.

"'The minuet was the Queen of dances, the dance of Queens. Since there is no longer a King, there is no longer the minuet.'

"And then he commenced, in a pompous style, a long dithyrambic eulogy, of which I did not understand one word. I begged of him to describe the steps, the movements, the poses. He became rather provoked at my obtuseness and turning toward his grave and silent companion, he exclaimed:

"'Elise! would you—you would be most obliging—would you be willing that we should show this gentleman what it was?'

"She turned her restless eyes on all sides, and being satisfied that we were alone, she rose without a word, and placed herself in front of him.

"Then I saw a sight never to be forgotten.

"They went and came with infantile grimaces, smiling, balancing, bowing, leaping like two old dolls, that had been set dancing by an old-fashioned mechanism, a little out of order, but constructed in olden times, by a skillful workman, according to the prevailing fashion.

"And I looked at them, my heart torn by conflicting emotions, my soul moved by an indescribable melancholy. It seemed to me that I was watching a sad yet comical apparition, the old-fashioned shadow of a past century. I wanted to laugh, and could hardly refrain from weeping.

"All at once they stopped; they had finished the figures of the dance. For some seconds they remained facing each other, grimacing in a most surprising manner, then without warning they fell into each other's arms sobbing bitterly.

"Three days later, I left Paris for the Provinces. When I returned two years afterward, the Nursery Gardens of the Luxembourg had been destroyed. What had become of the old couple, without their beloved garden of other days, with its labyrinthine paths, its perfumes of the past and its gracefully turned hedges?

"Are they dead? Are they wandering through the streets of modern Paris, like two exiles lost to all hope? Do they dance, spectre-like, a fantastic minuet among the cypress trees of a cemetery, along the pathways bordered by tombs, by the light of the moon?

"Their remembrance haunts me, torments me, tortures me, remains in me like a wound. Why? I do not know why.

"No doubt, you think me a silly old man, with all these memories of the Past!"

The following dramatic little sketch, with its bugle-note of war ringing throughout its pathetic love-story, is still long enough to emphasize distinctly the favorite Continental idea of the unfaithfulness of woman and the treachery of man in all affairs of the heart. It was written by P. Feval, and has been translated from the Spanish for ROMANCE by Annie W. Ayer.

THE SONG OF THE PEAR-TREE.

I.

A PEAR-TREE stood at the end of the village. In the springtime it seemed like a nosegay of flowers. The gardener's lodge stood back from the road; the gardener's daughter was called Perrine.

We were lovers.

II.

She was sixteen. What roses in her cheeks! As many blossoms as there were on the pear-tree. It was beneath the pear-tree that I said to her:

"Perrine, my Perrine, when will you marry me?"

III.

Everything smiled about her; her hair, in which the wind played gently; her figure; her bare feet in their little wooden shoes; her hands, which drew down the overhanging boughs to breathe in the perfume of the flowers; her pure brow; her teeth, white between her red lips. Ah! I loved her dearly.

"Our wedding will be in the harvest-time," she said, "if the Emperor does not carry you off as a soldier."

IV.

When the day for the drawing of lots arrived, I lighted a taper: the idea of leaving her was more than I could bear. The Holy Virgin be praised! I drew the

highest number! But to Jean, my foster-brother, a worse lot fell.

I found him weeping and saying: "Mother, my poor mother!"

V.

"Console yourself, Jean: I am an orphan, and will go in your stead," I said to him impulsively

He would not believe me.

Perrine stood under the pear-tree, her eyes filled with tears. They were more beautiful than her smiles.

She said to me: "You have done a noble thing. See, my Pierre, I will wait for you."

VI.

Right, left, right, left! Forward, march! So we reached Wagram. Pierre, be brave! Here is the enemy. I saw a line of fire. There were five hundred cannons thundering at once, and smoke oppressed the lungs and blood soaked the feet.

I was afraid and looked behind me.

VII.

Behind me was the village and the pear-tree whose blossoms had changed into fruit. I closed my eyes and saw Perrine, who was praying for me. God be praised! Pierre, be brave! Forward, forward! Right, left! Aim, fire! Charge bayonet!

"Ah, ah! the recruit does well. Boy, what is your name?"

"Monsieur, my name is Pierre."

"Pierre, I make you a corporal!"

VIII.

Perrine, O my Perrine! Corporal! Hurrah for war! The day of battle is a holiday. To rise in the army, all that is necessary is to put one foot foremost. Left, right.

"Was it you, Pierre?"

"Yes, your majesty."

I received my epaulets.

There were plenty on the shoulders of the dead.

IX.

"Monsieur, a thousand thanks,"—and on to Moscow! On the vast, snow-covered plains a road marked by the dead; here, the river; there, the enemy; on both sides, death!

"Who will place the first pontoon?"

"I, Monsieur."

"Always you, Captain."

He gave me his cross.

X.

God be praised! Perrine, my Perrine, you will be proud of me. The campaign is ended, and I have my leave.

Ring, bells, for our wedding. The road is long, but hope travels fast. Down there, behind that hill, there is the village.

I recognized the belfry. The bells are ringing.

XI.

Ringing, but the pear-tree? The month of flowers has come, but still I do not see the flower-laden branches. I had always seen them from afar. That was because I used to come on foot. They had cut down the tree of my early love.

The blossoms had come. All the bright blossoms, but its branches lay scattered on the ground.

XII.

"Why are the bells ringing, Matthieu?"

"For a wedding, Monsieur le Capitaine."

Matthieu did not know me.

A wedding! He told the truth. The bride and groom ascended the steps of the church.

The bride was Perrine, my Perrine, joyous and more

beautiful than ever. Jean, my brother, was the bridegroom.

XIII.

The people around me were saying: "They love each other."

"But Pierre?" I asked.

"What Pierre?" they answered. They had forgotten me.

XIV.

I knelt at the church-door. I prayed for Perrine, and I prayed for Jean: all that I loved on earth.

The service over, I gathered a blossom from the pear-tree—a poor little withered blossom—and went on my way without looking back.

God be praised! They love each other. They will be happy.

XV.

"Monsieur!"

"You are back already, Pierre?"

"Yes."

"You are only two-and-twenty. You will be a General, and you will be knighted. If you wish, I will give you a countess for a wife."

Pierre took from his breast a withered flower, plucked from the fallen pear-tree.

"Monsieur, my heart is like this. I wish a post in the vanguard, where I can die as a Christian soldier."

XVI.

The post in the vanguard was given him.

At the end of the village there is the grave of a Colonel killed on a day of victory—two-and-twenty.

In place of a name there are these three words:

"God be praised!"

Everybody has agonized, at one time or another, over a vain attempt to recall some name or word, once familiar, but now obstinately eluding the memory. This effort, in a state of nervous prostration, might, as one can readily imagine, produce a condition bordering upon frenzy ; but it is seldom that such a sufferer has so much humor infused into a description of his case as is found in the following amusing story by Alexander Moszkowski. It has been translated from the German for ROMANCE by L. M. Broughton.

EGLANTINE AND LYSIART.

"MAY I take some books with me?" I asked my physician, when he spoke of sending me away to a remote village among the Tyrolean Alps.

"Certainly you may," answered he—"that is to say, a time table and a Baedeker. Anything else I strictly forbid. Above all, I insist that you shall not exert your brain in any way during your short holiday."

I listened obediently to his orders, and promised to perform wonders in the way of doing nothing during the next three weeks. Then an intimate friend and I packed our trunks and started on our wanderings. In Munich we bade farewell to the world. Here, by chance, a performance of Wagner's youthful opera "The Fairies" was being given, and I enjoyed it hugely, remembering that it was not I who should write a criticism of it for the morning paper.

From Munich we travelled some hours by rail; then drove through a well-known valley; then by a long and narrow mountain pass to a small side-valley, the end of which is surrounded by glaciers; and here we stopped at the little Alpine village, St. Tupfeil, a spot of ideal loneliness, which you will not find on any map.

If I were to count up all the things that one can *not* obtain in this charming village, I should quickly step

over the space allowed me in this paper. Before all, there is no hotel.

We obtained lodgings at the pastor's, and had the satisfaction of learning, during the first minute of our stay, that there was not another stranger in the entire valley. We soon found that we had come to the right place. A delightful feeling of apathy overcame us. The outer world, which had disappeared from our sight, began also to fade from our remembrance. We inhaled the air from the glaciers like laughing-gas, and it impregnated us with the bacilli of idleness, which increased and thickened until the will, as well as the intellect, was enveloped by a compact, even layer of indolence.

Far away, in the stormy world, where men hurry and live, war might have broken out and we should not have heard of it. With the connivance of the pastor, it had been cunningly arranged by our friends that no letter, no newspaper should disturb our twilight existence. Out of reach, out of sight and hearing, released from the bustle and striving of busy men, our souls floated in that wonderful space which Indian sages call Nirwana.

Our bodies, it is true, we fostered with a most earthly tenderness, and cared not in the least for the deterioration of our intellects. Our division of the day included three breakfasts, two dinners, and two suppers; in addition to these important labors, we abandoned ourselves daily to an extended siesta, and proved with inward content the amount of food and sleep a man can take in one day, when he has nothing else to do.

After the third day, we had pretty well accustomed ourselves to silence; short, broken sounds, used with a view to sparing the lungs as much as possible, were the means by which we exchanged our few thoughts. For my part, my only intercourse, my friend Richard excepted, was with two goats belonging to the pastor, which I had learned to know and love in the meadows below the house. Alas! that the rest and peace of our idyllic life should suddenly be cruelly disturbed!

Fate willed it that, returning from a walk one day, I should, with a most unusual effort, put my hand in my overcoat-pocket, and chancing to feel a folded piece of paper, draw it forth and mechanically open it. It was the playbill of "The Fairies," which we had seen at Munich.

Against my will, my thoughts began to wander to Wagner, from him to "The Fairies," from that to Tannhäuser, from Tannhäuser to Lohengrin. How did it happen that I thought of Weber's "Euryanthe"? Ah, I see. Euryanthe is in some respects the prototype of Lohengrin. At any rate, the figures of Ortrud and Tetramund are analogous to the sinful pair in Weber's opera,—to—to—what *are* they called? Just for a moment I could not recollect their names. That was certainly a curious failing of my memory—to forget the names of two characters in an opera of Weber's, two characters as well known as Max and Agatha in "Der Freischütz." Well, they would occur to me in a second.

But they did not occur to me!

I endeavored to put away all thoughts of Euryanthe. What interest had the romantic opera for me in my world-forgotten retirement?

After some minutes I understood that not thinking is much more exhausting than thinking. I felt as if a distant voice called the wished-for names continually to me, only not clearly enough; as if a phonetic picture of the words danced before my eyes and I could not see it. Well, I was firmly resolved that seize those two fugitive names I would, and I would martyr my brain until it confessed them.

In front of the house, I found my companion, and hurried to him, saying: "Richard, tell me quickly all the characters in Euryanthe. I cannot remember the names of the alto and bass, and have been worrying over them for the last hour."

Richard blinked lazily at me, and gave me by signs to understand that he had not the slightest intention of fatiguing himself on my behalf. Only after urgent persuasion, he declared that he had never seen the

opera, as "there were no dances for Fil. dell' Era in it."

I left my second supper untasted and went early to bed. Oh, this torture! A reptile in the shape of an interrogation-point was in my brain, and twisted itself with horrible, snaky movements through all the windings of my thoughts. In vain I represented to myself that a thought is only useful when it binds causes with consequences into logical chains, that it is absolute waste of time to work at a dead point in one's memory. In vain reason preached that this point was nothing but a point, a nothing, the coming to life of which would not bring me the least reward; unreason held fast to it that the lost word was a treasure of unknown value, and worried and brooded, hoping, despairing, always in the same direction.

Toward morning, my demon decided to rest awhile, and delivered me over to a deep but uneasy sleep. A sudden noise of falling and broken crockery awakened me. My friend had just dropped the water-jug.

"Wretch, what have you done?" I cried, sitting up. "I was just dreaming I had Hanslick's 'Modern Operas' here, and was reading the notice of Weber. If you had let me sleep a minute longer, I should certainly have found the two lost names."

Richard looked at me with a concerned air. A slight suspicion crossed him that my Euryanthe was going to shatter the peace of our summer rest. In the careful manner in which one speaks to a sick person, he began to tell me that there are certain practical methods for renewing an obliterated spot in the memory. There is, for instance, the alphabetical method; one must repeat all the letters of the alphabet in order, and form different syllables upon each one, until a chance resemblance in sound leads one on the right track.

I devoted my morning to this intellectual pursuit. At 11 A. M. precisely I announced, with a cry of joy, that I had achieved a result. I was absolutely certain that the last syllable of the woman's name was "ine."

The tail of the monster was found! Now it was

necessary to construct a body for it. I went through all the combinations from Josephine and Adeline to oleomargarine and brilliantine a hundred times, backward and forward. All in vain. The method contained a gap which I was unable to fill. I reasoned that, in my capacity as opera-critic, I had written that accursed name ending in "ine" often enough. How had I written it on those occasions? "The universal favorite Frau Klatsky was excellent as,—'ine.'" "Frau Standigl proved herself equal to the difficult rôle of —'ine.'" Deuce take it!

It was impossible to bring it forth. My travelling library—the time-table and Baedeker—contained not the slightest allusion to Euryanthe. The resources of the village were limited to some Bibles and hymn-books, which also were not calculated to assist in the unravelling of an operatic conundrum. The worthy pastor watched me with a distressed eye. He saw that a heavy grief weighed upon my spirits, and besought me to confide in him. He nodded his head, and lamented over my misfortune. "Yes, if only his predecessor were here. He was a remarkable musician, a master of organ-playing and well acquainted with all the arts."

Unfortunately this pious and accomplished shepherd had departed a year before to join a South-Sea Mission, and had left his successor nothing but the two goats as a bequest.

As I strode up and down refusing my breakfast, my friend, who had become in the highest degree uneasy, offered me counsel. It was impossible, he said, longer to live like this. We must find some way out; we would send a telegram to some musical friend whose summer residence I knew. The telegram was written, and ran as follows:

"Mr. O. E. Tenor,

"Villa Louise, Heligoland.

"What are the names of the two characters in Euryanthe, who rank in musical history as the prototypes of Ortrud and Telramund? Reply paid."

The nearest telegraph-office was about ten miles from St. Tupfeil. The paper was solemnly given over to a specially trustworthy cowherd, with directions to wait for an answer and not to return without one, on pain of instant death. So far all was well. We felt a gentle satisfaction in the consciousness that everything that could be done had been done. If my friend were in Heligoland, and I was pretty certain that he was, he would without a doubt be able to throw some light upon my darkened brain. But how terribly the minutes crept!

In my desire to fill up the intervening time somehow, I turned out my trunk, the inside of which I had papered with old newspapers before leaving Berlin. Perchance a happy fate would decree that a helpful opera criticism might be among them. I look, I read! Tax on corn—distress in Russia—harvest statistics—imported hogs—tax on corn—distress—no, I find no drug to ease my sufferings here. Suddenly I stop. My glance falls on an advertisement, "Sylvana," by Carl Maria von Weber. My eyes remain fixed on the y: Silvana should be spelled with an i. And that same moment a shimmer of light shines upon me. The man's name contains a y! without a doubt a y!

And now I begin my game of patience with the alphabet once more—that terrible witches' dance of syllables round the dead spot in my brain. Tyll—syrup —sylvan— dryad—dryander — syntax—sylvan—Tybalt and, between, the fearful "ines." Leopoldine—vaseline—Georgine—gelatine, until in the end I mix y with ine, and, hopelessly confused, finish up with Phryne and misogyny.

Toward vesper-time a jolly tourist from the mountains came to ask a night's lodging from the pastor. I saw him some distance off, and as he came nearer, I heard him whistling "Durch die Wälder, durch die Anen." He whistles Weber, and is sure to know more than that one melody. So thought I, and entered at once into conversation.

"By-the-by, do you chance to know Euryanthe?"

"No," answered he, "I don't care for the Tyrolean girls. I am a married man, and am on a walking tour through the Tyrol for the purpose of strengthening my muscles."

I left the wanderer to a roast leg of pork, which might have served Hercules as a weapon, and betook myself to the village street, where I paced up and down like an unquiet spirit.

The sun was departing as my cowherd appeared, running, with my telegram held high above his head. The feeling which took possession of me I can only compare to that of a criminal on the steps of the gallows, who sees a king's messenger bringing the unhoped-for pardon.

And now I read the answer from my comrade in Heligoland:

"Congratulate you on your good spirits. Laughed heartily over your droll examination-question. Kind regards."

I let the paper fall, and rushed into the house. "Pack up and depart!" was my one thought; to get out to the world, where there are books, and music-shops, and sensible people who answer questions. No objections were raised to my tyrannical orders; in a quarter of an hour we were ready to start.

The kind pastor insisted upon accompanying us part of the way through the meadows. On the hill above us, I noticed the two goats and wished I had bidden farewell to them. "What a pity these creatures have not names, so that one might call them down," said I, considering whether I should mount the steep or no.

"Certainly they have names," replied the pastor, "and very learned ones, which my predecessor gave them," and through the hollow of his hand he called:

"Eglantine—Lysiart!"

Great heavens! A message from above had come to me through the mouth of this pious servant of the church. I fell upon his neck, and after the first surprise, he guessed the reason of my speechless delight.

The load was shaken from my soul; the dead spot in my brain began to stir and fill with pulsing life. We returned to St. Tupfeil in triumph, and began to rest our minds once more, according to all the rules of Buddhist philosophy.

"Do you know, Richard," I said, "I feel like the man in Beethoven's 'Fidelio'—what is he called?—like Florestan, when he. . . ."

"For Heaven's sake no more opera resemblances," broke in my friend, "or you will forget a name, and we shall have all this fuss over again, and I don't enjoy the prospect."

I made him a solemn promise on the spot, and our smooth Nirwana surface was disturbed by no more waves of sound.

It is hardly possible that a more awful commentary could be written upon unfilial conduct, and the greed for gold, than is to be found in the following marrow-chilling narrative. It is founded upon well-authenticated facts, widely current in one of the western counties of New York State, and has been written expressly for ROMANCE by Torrey Hicks.

THE WILD MAN IN THE WOODS.

IN the midst of a clearing in the Bristol Hills stood a lonely cabin, about a mile from the nearest village, with its one store, a little primitive church, and a group of one-story buildings. Mrs. Thatcher, the wife of the plain farmer who lived there, often felt lonely when her husband was at work in the field or felling timber in the forest. The Thatchers had but recently moved thither, and they had heard strange stories concerning the former inhabitants of the cabin. Though Mrs. Thatcher considered them idle tales, still she locked the doors in her husband's absence, and often wished for nearer neighbors.

It was now the first of October, the nights were cold, and the sumach leaves were turning red. One evening at nine o'clock, when Mrs. Thatcher was about to extinguish the lamp, a sudden commotion was heard in the sheepfold near by. Mr. Thatcher dropped the candle which he held in his hand, and exclaiming, "Something after those sheep again!" hastily pulled his boots on, and bidding his wife to follow with the lantern, hurried out at the back door in time to see a dark, lithe figure disappearing into the woods. The sheep were huddled together, and upon investigation he found one of the lambs missing.

"It beats all where those sheep go to!" he ejaculated: "That's the third one this month, and how man or beast can get over those bars I don't see!"

At this point the baby cried, and they hastened back into the house.

The next day Mr. Thatcher and one of the neighbors were drawing timber about half a mile from the farmer's house, to which they returned at dinner-time. John Phillips had never been inside the house before, and remarked upon its lonely situation.

"Ain't you afraid to stay here after all those murders?" he inquired, as he passed his plate for boiled cabbage.

"Murders?" exclaimed Mrs. Thatcher, laying down her knife and fork in surprise. "*In this house!* O Reub, why did you ever come here?"

"Why, yes," replied John, composedly attacking his fresh supply of food. "Haven't you heard tell of them? Two of them, and come to think about it, jest about this time of the year. First, there was a family, by the name of Morgan—nice folks—lived here a considerable while, as much as fifteen or twenty years; and about twenty years ago this month, they were killed one dark, windy night, and not a cent left in the house. Nobody knows who did it. For a good many years the house stood empty, but one spring some folks from way up north moved in, and lived here till October, and jest about the same time in the year that the Morgans were killed, one of their boys was found out in the back yard, all cut up. No clew to that, neither. That was six or seven years ago. I'd keep well locked up nights if I was you."

Mrs. Thatcher had grown very pale during this story, and glanced nervously over her shoulder as the wind slammed the door. John tipped back his chair, and seeing how agitated Mrs. Thatcher appeared, turned the conversation by remarking: "Anything been after your chickens, Farmer Thatcher? I had a fine pullet and my old rooster stolen last week."

"No, but something's been after my sheep," was the reply. "My wife and I heard a racket last night, and I thought I saw some kind of a creature scooting off through the trees. It beats the Dutch how anything could get at 'em any way; but sure it is, three lambs are gone."

"Well, I declare," said John, as both men arose from the table.

"Now, wife," said Reuben, "keep the doors locked, and I'll be back before nightfall."

Mrs. Thatcher watched the two men until they were out of sight; but she did not see a dark, hairy creature that crept noiselessly past the house into the gloomy woods beyond.

The day passed as usual, and toward evening the two men set out for home. They were obliged to go through a long, dreary stretch of woods and fields before they came to the cross-road where they took different turns. They were passing through a large cornfield, on the south of which was a deep ravine, while on the east were the woods which they were about to reenter. They were not far from the southeast corner of the fields, and were just beginning to climb the fence on the east, when they were attracted by a sound like the crunching of bones, which seemed to come from the direction of the ravine. Turning, they saw in the dusk a strange figure sitting on the other fence, with its back toward them. It was apparently a naked, hairy being of human size and shape, and both men stopped with blanched faces and wide-open, startled eyes.

"Good heavens!" cried Phillips, seizing the other's arm in terror.

At the sound, the grizzly thing turned its head, and the dim twilight disclosed a horribly pale and haggard face, nearly covered with black hair, and smeared with blood. The creature leaped from the fence with the agility of a panther, and disappeared with swift, bounding springs down the steep, rocky sides of the ravine. The two men stood transfixed to the spot, and, after they lost sight of the awful apparition, they could still hear the loose stones rattling down the embankment where the unearthly feet had fled. A frightful silence followed, only broken by the dismal hooting of an owl in the top of a neighboring tree. Then, with an oath, the terrified men turned and ran

toward home. When Thatcher reached his house, he sank pale and breathless into a chair by the kitchen hearth, thankful that he heard his wife in the front room, singing the baby to sleep with the old familiar lullaby. After a few moments he arose, and, endeavoring to regain his composure, went to the sink, washed his face and hands, and was just rubbing his cheeks briskly in order to give them something like their natural color, when Mrs. Thatcher came into the kitchen, and began to make the tea.

"You here, Reub?" she said. "I'm glad, for I've been nervous all day."

Thatcher shuddered slightly, as he continued to rub his face, although it was perfectly dry, and replied, "Guess there ain't anything to fear, Mary."

"Well, I suppose not; but I've been terribly scary, and not long before you came I heard a mourning dove in one of the trees near the barn, and I couldn't help wondering if anything was happening to you."

Reuben said nothing, and now that all was so quiet and natural, he began to think that the frightful thing might, after all, have been but the creation of his brain, an optical illusion—something unreal at all events. He spoke of this to Phillips the next morning when they began work as usual, and he was inclined to the same opinion.

They decided to say nothing of the matter, but they started for home a little earlier than usual, both feeling a trifle nervous, and armed with good-sized sticks. They walked a bit faster when they reached the cornfield where the last night's event had taken place, and they looked apprehensively at the fence where the horrible thing—vision or reality, they knew not which—had been sitting, with its hairy back toward them; but there was nothing to be seen, and the men breathed more freely as they commenced to climb the fence. Just then Phillips laid his hand on Thatcher's arm, and both stopped, half-expecting a repetition of the frightful scene. The landscape was as peaceful as a picture, with the long, slanting rays of the setting sun lying

across the tasselled corn, the trees that fringed the ravine, and the undulating meadow-land beyond. Some birds were still singing in the woods, but above their cheerful vesper-notes could be heard the same sharp sound of rattling stones that had fallen upon their ears when the horrible creature had fled down the embankment the evening before.

Both men turned pale, and jumping hastily over the fence, made their way home as fast as possible.

The next morning Mrs. Thatcher, in company with a party of some half-dozen other women, went to a quilting-bee at a large farmhouse, situated at no very great distance from the town. Mrs. Phillips came to keep house, and care for the baby, as Mrs. Thatcher expected to be gone until eight or nine o'clock. The party set forth in a lumber-wagon, drawn by a pair of large Canada horses, and were very talkative and merry as they drove through the beautiful country, for an hour or more, when the jolly farmer on the front seat reined up at the side door of "Squire" Allen's hospitable house.

After a busy day, and a hearty country supper, the crowd set out for home in high spirits. They were nearing the village, but were just on the outskirts of a dense wood, with a ploughed field on their left, and a stretch of swampy land extending for some distance at their right. Recent rains had filled a slight hollow near a clump of sumach bushes, and made a shallow, muddy pond, which now reflected the yellow moon in its slimy waters. Of a sudden, the horses stopped, snorted in a terrified manner, and reared on their haunches. One or two women screamed, and at this there was a splashing in the stagnant pool, and a horrible sight met the startled eyes of all. A strange, hairy monstrosity leaped from the dark depths of the pond, and sprang with ape-like speed across the open field into the thick woods beyond. The horses plunged forward, unguided by the driver, who was white and trembling and unable to quiet them. Mrs. Brown fainted.

The attention of the other women was thus attracted to her, and their thoughts for the time being were partially turned from their recent fright. But when Mrs. Thatcher reached home, she was so nervous and agitated that, as soon as she saw her husband, she burst into tears. He tried to quiet her as well as he could, and decided to report the strange occurrences that had recently taken place.

There was no need of this, however, as the village was full of the news the next morning; and the remarkable episode of the night before was the principal topic of conversation at the post-office and country store. The more sober-minded among the men were inclined to believe that it was only an hallucination of hysterical women; but the farmer who had driven corroborated the story, and that, together with the statement of Thatcher and Phillips, left no doubt in the minds of all that these mysteries were founded on facts.

A body of men, Thatcher and Phillips among their number, decided to station themselves every night for a week or more in the cornfield where the two men had seen the frightful object whose appearance had caused so much excitement. On the third night of their watch, when it was growing late, and they were becoming weary and incredulous, and were almost asleep, they suddenly heard a soft, cat-like tread in the sumach bushes near by. Presently there emerged from the under-growth a dark creature, covered with hair, and dragging behind him a large dead sheep which Phillips recognized as one that he had missed from his own flock that morning. The group of men drew nearer together and watched the Thing as it tore the animal limb from limb, and with a dripping hind-quarter in its grasp, reached the top rail of the fence with a spring, and began devouring its prey with ravenous haste. The crunching of the bones, and the demoniacal glare in the creature's eye, so sickened and frightened the men that they felt as though there were some ghoulish nightmare upon them, until Thatcher suddenly seized his gun and fired. His hand trembled so that he missed

his aim, and, with an unearthly cry, the fiend disappeared so quickly that they might almost have thought themselves deceived by an apparition had not the mangled remains of the sheep lain there as proof of the horrible truth.

. . . . . .

Nearly fifty years before, the Thatchers' house was owned by the Morgans, to whom Phillips had referred in talking with Mr. Thatcher. The family consisted of the father and mother and a son, whose wild ways were the terror of the neighborhood, and the occasion of great anxiety to his parents. At ten, he was possessed with a desire to become a robber-chief; at twelve, his thoughts ran in the pirate line; and at fifteen he ran away from home.

The fates treated him variously for many years, until, when he was nearly thirty, he not only lost a snug little fortune by gambling, but when excited by liquor was persuaded by his companions to risk a considerable amount which he did not own. He finally found himself so pressed for the money that he left the city where the unlucky event had taken place; but was followed by the roughs who were his associates, and finally began a desperate tramp from place to place, evading the police and mankind in general.

A year or more passed in this way, and Morgan's life was so wretched that he meditated suicide more than once; but he never took the decisive step, and kept wandering on, earning a little here and there, but oftener descending to theft. One night he fell in with a company of disreputable characters, who made him thoroughly drunk, and took him with them on board a train eastward bound. There he fell asleep, so that he was not disturbed by the conductor for some time until, his companions becoming riotous, they were all put off at a little country station. There the others deserted him, starting off in a southwesterly direction for some haunt which they knew and had frequented. Morgan began his weary tramping next morning, though he was ill and dizzy from the previous day's escapade.

Arriving at a new settlement the following noon, he was suddenly accosted by his old enemy, who threatened him in the most violent terms if the money were not paid within a week. Morgan fled from the town as soon as it was dark, and travelled on foot by night and day, still in an easterly direction, and, without knowing it, reached the old Bristol Hills where he had spent his restless, childish days, dreaming of a brilliant future lying beyond. He travelled all night, the burden of his trouble heavy upon him, and after walking a mile or more, through a large forest of old oaks and pine trees, he stumbled upon a hay-stack, and half-unconsciously sinking upon the ground, fell asleep. Upon awaking an hour or two later, he discovered a house a few rods away, and took the direction of the light which shone in one of the windows. He suddenly caught his breath as he saw the back of an old man who was counting money which lay on the table. With a rush the feeling came over him that he must break through the window, seize the tempting pile of yellow gold, and repay the debt that had made him a thief and a beggar, and all but a madman. He drew closer, and forgetting the danger of being discovered, pressed his face against the cold panes of glass. His breath came quick and hard, his fingers trembled, his brain seemed on fire. The man finally put the money in a tin box, which he deposited under a bed, the lights were extinguished, and all was still within.

. . . . . .

It was after midnight when the old man and his wife were awakened by some one in their room. With a shriek the woman sprang from the bed, while her husband, quickly following, snatched his gun from the wall; but it was seized from his grasp, and when the trigger was pulled, it was he who fell dead, instead of the robber. As Morgan thought that the woman was stumbling to the door to summon help, he struck her down also, and with the box under his arm, rushed out into the night, leaving the two dead bodies lying on the floor of the house where all had been peace and

quiet a few moments before; but something drew him to the place of horror again, and he stood looking with terror-stricken eyes at the scene before him—the work of his own hands. How long he was there with those dead faces before him, he did not know; but, as the cold gray dawn pierced through the dark tree-tops, and it grew slowly but steadily lighter, his fast-beating heart seemed to stand still, like a weight of ice in his breast, for the coming morning showed strangely familiar objects, and he saw, staring up at him with their pleading, sightless eyes, the faces of the mother at whose knee he had learned his childish prayers, and the father who had endeavored to restrain him from his wild and reckless ways—yes, *their* faces, the features growing steadily recognizable in the ghastly light, and showing that they had grown old and wan in waiting for his home-coming, and he had come—O God, the horror of it! With the yell of a maniac, he leaped through the window, the broken panes of glass flying in all directions, and fled wildly into the forest.

. . . . . .

Some of the towns-folk, stopping at the cottage with the mail two days later, found the furniture in disorder, the window broken, and the inmates lying dead upon the floor.

No clew was ever found to the mystery. The house was naturally shunned for some years; but at last it was again occupied by a family from Maine, who lived there until the following October, when the eldest son was found brutally murdered one morning when the sumac leaves were red. The family immediately left the neighborhood, and the next occupants of the cottage were Farmer Thatcher and his wife, whe had lived there since the April preceding the opening of this story.

. . . . . .

Morgan, meantime, bereft of his senses, had wandered about the wildest woods and fields, secreting himself in the daytime, and only venturing out at night to secure food. His appearance naturally lost little by little that of a human being, and he became akin to a

fiend in body as well as mind. It is probable that many times the maniac revisited the scene of his awful crimes; but no one saw him in that lonely spot. After the re-occupation of the house, however, as he was foraging, as a beast might, for his supplies of food, he approached it one morning, and there at the back of the cottage, where his father should have been, was a strong young man, making the morning air ring with the vibrant strokes of his axe. At this sight a flood of fire seemed to spread through the wild man's veins, and, seizing the axe before the young wood-chopper was aware of his presence, he dealt him a blow on the back of his head, and then, after mutilating his face with fiendish glee, dashed back to his haunt in a distant cave.

Both of these horrible crimes occurred during the month of October. Many Octobers passed before people again dared to inhabit the lonely cottage near the woods; but it had been stoutly built, and at last the Thatchers had happened to see it. Shortly afterward, finding that it would be sold cheaply by the owners, they bought it.

Mr. Thatcher was at the village one evening and his wife had gone to the kitchen to get some water for the baby, which lay in a cradle at no great distance from one of the windows. As she was returning with the cup in her hand, she noticed that the window was up; she started to close it, when a long, hairy arm was stealthily thrust through the opening, and a claw-like hand seized the child; but the mother, grasping a stick of wood, struck the creature's wrist with such a quick hard blow that he loosed his hold. She snatched the child in her arms, and stood for an instant in mortal terror, not knowing which way to turn; but soon, hearing footsteps at the rear of the house, she threw a blanket about the baby, and seizing a lantern which stood lighted on the table, rushed out by the front way.

An hour later she burst into the schoolhouse, where her husband had been attending a town-meeting, and was just putting on his coat preparatory to going home.

The neighborhood was quickly alarmed, and a large body of men started out for the Thatchers' house, leaving the mother and baby with one of the women of the town.

They were some time on their way, as the moon was not yet up; but at the edge of the wood their attention was attracted by a strange light, and upon drawing nearer they could discern flames and smoke issuing from the cottage. As they reached the clearing, they saw that the house was burning and past being saved, even if there had been means at hand. Suddenly an unearthly shriek rent the air, and the startled spectators saw, leaping and dancing in the midst of the conflagration, the Wild Man of the Bristol Hills. The flames roared and crackled, and the sparks flew up through the trees to the black sky above. The spectators turned faint with horror. The loathsome creature continued to utter the most fiendish yells that ever burst upon human ear: the glowing rafters tottered and fell: the beams crashed above him; and thus he perished amid the ruins of his childhood's home.

There is nobody who deals in riches and lords and ladies, and the materials of romance generally, with so lavish and princely a hand as "Ouida." Her readers are introduced into a society which, whatever its failings—and they are sometimes many—is accomplished in all the arts of dainty living and extravagant expenditure. Here is a sweet little love-scene from her pen, in which the picturesqueness of situation, attractiveness of person, and fascinating disparity of social position combine to give to the characters and the story a peculiar charm. It first appeared in *Belgravia*.

IN PITTI.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

Sir Oscar Beresford, an English Gentleman.
Dorothy Claremont, a Tapestry Painter.

SCENE: The Sala degli Arazzi in Palazzo Pitti.
TIME: An April Morning; Twelve o'Clock.

Sir Oscar Beresford—Mind you let me out at one.

Custodian—Al tocco—al tocco!—non-dubiti, signore!

Sir Oscar—Why on earth do you lock one in?

Custodian (shrugs his shoulder)—M-a-h!

Sir Oscar—Of course I know you only obey orders; but it is only an utterly idiotic regulation, and devilish uncomplimentary to one's appearance. [Custodian retires and locks the door on the outside; his steps die away in the distance. Sir Oscar goes to open a window.]

Dorothy Claremont (seated painting with her back to him, looks around and speaks)—You must not do that; they will turn you out.

Sir Oscar—Why?

Dorothy—Why do they lock us in? No one knows.

Sir Oscar—But it is such a warm morning, and by noon it will be terrible.

Dorothy—You are a stranger, I see, or you would not expect such simple reasons to have any weight.

Sir Oscar—And you really mean the windows are never opened?

Dorothy—Never. At least not by such profane hands as ours. Besides, Italians never see the necessity for open windows. In winter they would let in the wind; in summer they would let in the sun. Such a trifle as air does not count.

Sir Oscar—Good heavens!

Dorothy — Would you kindly stand a little aside? You take off the light.

Sir Oscar—A thousand pardons! Excuse me, you are copying this tapestry?

Dorothy—This sofa. I have an order for the sofa and all the chairs.

Sir Oscar (aside)—An order! She looks like a princess out in a cotton frock for a freak. (Aloud.) How much that painted imitation tapestry is the fashion, isn't it? It must be a great bore to you, though; at least, I should think so. Myself, I hate copying.

Dorothy (coldly)—Probably you do not need it.

Sir Oscar—Oh, yes, indeed—at least—no, I do not need to do it—but I want to have rooms just like these built down at my place in Dorsetshire; and as I can draw a little, I thought I would design their decorations and take the scale of their proportions myself. Don't you think it better to do things oneself as far as one can?

Dorothy (briefly)—No doubt.

Sir Oscar (thinks)—How chilly she is all in a moment! I dare says she is vexing herself about having talked so familiarly to me. What a pretty girl it is!—and all that bright short hair of her own is charming. She is copying that sofa as if her life depended on it. Perhaps her bread does depend on it, poor child! I will go into the next room and take my measurements. When I come back, she may have thawed again. Who on earth can her people be that let her come out and be locked up all alone? I am sure she is English. No other than an English girl would dare be all alone with the face of Venus on her shoulders. There is

something absurdly wrong, now, in a pretty child like that having to paint linen for her bread, while here am I, who could very well earn my own living if I were pushed to it, bothered with more land and more money than I know what to do with. I must say Fate is a very silly person; she always gorges her fat chickens, and starves her lean ones. [Goes into the next room and remains there ten minutes; then returns.] This is the finest room, don't you think?

Dorothy (coldly)—By no means. There are others far finer. Take the Sala dei Stucchi.

Sir Oscar—Oh, yes; but that is not what I want. It is superb; but all that snow-white immensity would not suit a dusky English country house. These carvings, these sombre tapestries, this solemn gold, will suit it down to the ground. Do you—do you—know England at all? I think I cannot be mistaken in claiming you as a *compatriote?*

Dorothy (coldly)—Yes; I am English.

Sir Oscar—But you live in Italy?

Dorothy—I live in Italy.

Sir Oscar (to himself)—I am sure she thinks me a confoundedly impudent fellow. May not one talk in these old galleries? Art surely is a very good chaperon. She has got shy all in a second. Did I say anything insolent? Surely not. I had better sketch a little, perhaps, or she will think I cannot. [For twenty minutes measures proportions and draws outlines; stealthily glances from time to time at the tapestry-painter.]

Sir Oscar—I am afraid I bother you by drawing here? You want me to go away?

Dorothy (with significance)—Oh—if you draw—you have as much right here as I.

Sir Oscar (conscious of reproof)—But I am drawing! Only if you would permit me to talk just now and then—I can always work so much better when talking.

Dorothy—I cannot.

Sir Oscar (sensible of a snub, retires to his seat and draws diligently in profound silence)—What a dear little girl! How she gives it to me! To be sure, she

does not know anything about me. Perhaps it is bad form to try and draw out a woman while one's unknown oneself. How can I tell her my name, I wonder? I won't lose sight of her. She is too charming for anything. I must wait a little before I try. [Draws carefully for an hour, but draws the profile of his companion, instead of the proportions and decorations of the room. She is engrossed in her own work.]

Sir Oscar (aloud)—Pray forgive me if I venture to disturb you before I go; it is now after one o'clock; the man will come for me. Might I be permitted to ask—did I hear you rightly? Did you really say you were copying these tapestries for—for—any one?

Dorothy—For the tradesman who has ordered them—yes.

Sir Oscar—Then might I ask a very great favor indeed of you? Might I beg you to paint me a suite of this furniture? As I said, I am going to have some rooms in my own house decorated like these, with some tapestries that I found in Flanders, and if you would have the infinite goodness——

Dorothy—There is no question of goodness. I copy for any one who employs me.

Sir Oscar (disconcerted)—Ah, exactly—but still, you know, it will be a very great favor for me if you will permit me to be classed among your——

Dorothy—Patrons. When I have finished this set, I shall be happy to begin other pieces for you. It is my trade.

Sir Oscar—Pray do not call it a trade!

Dorothy—You cannot call it an art.

Sir Oscar—But indeed it is, as you do it. You have made me very happy. May I see you again to-morrow?

Dorothy—I am always here. But there is nothing to see me for, if you will give your orders now, and tell me where to send the pieces when finished.

Sir Oscar—Here is my card. I am staying in Florence at the Hotel del' Arno; but the paintings, of course, will be sent to Rivaux, my own place. We had one wing burnt down last autumn; and as I must re-

build it, I thought I could make it a replica of this part of the Pitti.

Dorothy (glancing at his card)—Since you are rich enough to do that, you should not have imitation tapestries on your sofas and chairs, when you have real ones on the wall. Go to the School of Art in Kensington. They say their embroideries are beautiful.

Sir Oscar—Oh, thanks; but I want you to do me these identical chairs.

Dorothy—As you please. If you will write your directions, I will attend to them as soon as this commission is finished.

Sir Oscar (to himself)—Clearly she wants to get rid of me. (Aloud.) Where may I send them?

Dorothy—You may leave them on that table.

Sir Oscar—I shall return to-morrow. I will bring them. I suppose the man won't forget to unlock the door?

Dorothy—Probably not. I was once forgotten until sunset.

Sir Oscar (sotto voce)—I wish I might be to-day, if you were forgotten too! What a cool young lady it is! She knows who I am now, but it don't seem to make any difference. (Looks at his watch.) By Jove, it is half-past two! Pardon me—how late do you stay here?

Dorothy—Till four.

Sir Oscar—Without eating anything?

Dorothy—I breakfasted before I came out.

Sir Oscar—Might I be favored with your address, in case—in case—anything should prevent my coming back here to-morrow?

Dorothy—Certainly. My name is Claremont, and I live at the Colombaia, Via di Petrarca.

Sir Oscar (writes it down)—So many thanks! The Dovecot—what a pretty idea! And are there any other doves beside you in it?

Dorothy (coldly)—I live with my mother. It is a poor place. We are poor.

Sir Oscar (tempted to say that with such a face as

hers any one is rich enough, but refraining)—But does not your mother feel uneasy about you when you are so long away?

Dorothy—Oh no; she knows I am strong and well.

Sir Oscar—Who taught you to snub people so unmercifully?

Dorothy—Strangers—who suppose that because I am copying in the palace I may be addressed without any ceremony, and am here only to amuse them.

Sir Oscar (coloring)—Oh, come; that is very severe! I assure you, my dear young lady, I never dreamed of being impertinent, I wouldn't be so for worlds; nobody could be to you——

Dorothy—I shall be more convinced of that if you will kindly allow me to continue my work in silence.

Sir Oscar—Oh, of course! I beg your pardon. (Goes again into the next room and begins to draw.) What a severe little kitten it is! Perhaps she is right, though. It is not altogether good form to bother these people who are pinned to their easels here; they must be mobbed and stared at day after day till they naturally show fight. That man decidedly has forgotten me. If the little girl would let one talk to her, it wouldn't matter, but making architectural sketches all alone on an empty stomach is not enlivening. I suppose I ought to have tipped the fellow beforehand. This is one of the lands of backsheesh. How pluckily the child holds on at her work! She makes one ashamed. To think I have never done anything I did not like all my life long, and that pretty child there has to slave away in a stifling room to make a few pounds at an age when she ought to be doing nothing but lawn-tennis, garden-parties, and cotillons. If one only might speak to her! but it will seem such awful bad form after that snub direct. [Hesitates, then sits down again to his plans; an hour passes: four o'clock strikes.]

Sir Oscar (taking out his watch)—Yes, four, as I live. Well, now we shall get out. I think I may say a word. She is putting up her calicoes. (Aloud.) I suppose we shall be let out soon, shall we not? How fear-

fully warm it is! Are you not very tired? Do you never get a headache or anything?

Dorothy (rising)—Yes, I often get a headache in the heat of the rooms. The custodian will be here in a moment. The people all leave the galleries at four.

Dorothy (later)—It is actually a quarter to five; something must have happened.

Sir Oscar—Oh, no; the fellow has had an extra dose of garlic and blue wine, and has gone to sleep somewhere. He'll be sure to come, as you said just now. Pray don't mind, and do eat one of your buns.

Dorothy—I do not want to eat, thanks; I am very thirsty. That air is pleasant.

Sir Oscar—Yes, we'll have the window open, though you hinted that the tortures of the Inquisition would follow.

Dorothy—It is the rule for no one to touch them.

Sir Oscar—And do you always follow rules?

Dorothy—Yes; I think one ought, else what use is it for them to be made?

Sir Oscar—Well, none that I ever could see, that is why I make a point of breaking them.

Dorothy—I suppose that is all very well for a man.

Sir Oscar—Why, what an old-fashioned little lady you are! you are not a bit emancipated, you are quite *arriérée*. I wonder if you are any relation of a man I was much attached to once; he was my tutor at Eton, a magnificent scholar and a true gentleman. What became of him I never knew. I am ashamed to say I forgot all about him when I went into the Guards; one grows so brutally selfish in the world. He was called Tom Claremont; he had been a Balliol scholar——

Dorothy—I think you speak of my father.

Sir Oscar (with great animation)—You don't mean it! Well, you are like him, now I think of it. Is he—is he—living?

Dorothy—No; he died many years ago. He had been obliged to come to Italy for his health. He married here. I know he was once a tutor at Eton.

Sir Oscar (with feeling)—My dear little lady, don't

snub me any more; I can assure you I loved Tom Claremont as much as a boy can love anything; any grain of sense or decency I have in me I owe to him, to say nothing of any Greek and Latin. You are the daughter of a very noble fellow. He deserved a better fate than to die in a foreign land and leave his child to work for her living.

Dorothy—He had always worked for his own, I believe. He always told me to rely on myself. He said poverty mattered little, but independence was the bread of life.

Sir Oscar—Oh, he was always a very proud fellow; if he had been less so, he might have been a headmaster or a bishop before now; but he could never eat that humble pie which is the only food that makes a man climb like a bean-stalk. I was only a boy—a very graceless, tiresome boy—but I was very devoutly attached to him. You do not seem to believe me?

Dorothy (hesitates)—You did not care to learn what became of him!

Sir Oscar—My dear child—I beg your pardon—I mean you don't understand what the world is when a fellow is just launched into it, with money enough and birth enough for everybody to come buzzing about him like bees. There is no room left for old friendships. The whole year is a galop *ventre à terre*. Everybody flatters you; everybody tempts you; everybody invites you; you think everybody feminine is an angel, and every man Jack of them a good fellow. You are like a colt in a clover field—you don't know that the pace will tell on you and that you may come a cropper before you've done, though you are first favorite. Myself, I went straight from Eton into the First Life, and—and—and I enjoyed myself; I did no end of follies: I spent a great deal of money—I bought my experience, in a word—and bought it pretty dear. Well, all this don't interest you, I know; only I want you to understand how it was that I came not to know anything about Tom Claremont. One never does know anything about one's tutors. But, on my honor, I very often thought

of him. He had had great ideas of what I might do, and I disappointed him greatly by becoming a Guardsman—no doubt he thought much better of me than I deserved. I had a sort of reluctance to see him, when, after all, I had just fallen into the ruck with the others and done nothing on earth except amuse myself; and so, you see, the time slipped away and I never met him again; and now you say he died years ago, and you are his daughter?

Dorothy (the tears in her eyes)—Yes, he died some years ago; he died at Camaldoli one summer.

Sir Oscar (earnestly)—When one of my big livings came vacant, I wrote and offered it to him. I was just of age then. He thanked me, but he would not take it. He had some scruples about preaching what he did not believe. He was not orthodox; he was something much better. I ought to have gone and offered it to him. I shall never forgive myself.

Dorothy—He would not have taken it. He thought the whole system of the Church of England wrong. He used to say that the beneficed clergyman was worse than the fat monk, for the monk at least gave no dinner-parties and had no liveried servants.

Sir Oscar—How like him! I can hear him say it. Yes, he was one of the few men who lived up to their principles. What did old Hildebrand write? *Dilexi justitiam, et odivi iniquitatem, propterea morior in exsilio.*

Dorothy—I am prouder of him, so.

Sir Oscar—Quite justly. To have the courage of one's opinions and to suffer for them is the grandest thing a man can do. It is not my way; but I can admire it.

Dorothy—Have you no opinions? I suppose you hardly lack the courage?

Sir Oscar—Perhaps I lack both; I don't know. You see there is nothing to try me; I have always done what I wished to do; and when you are an idle colonel of Guards, nobody expects you to have any "views."

Dorothy (with interest)—The Guards! Did you go to Egypt?

Sir Oscar—Oh, yes; Kassassin and Cairo, and all the rest of it. It was over too soon; that was the worst of it. If only Arabi had destroyed the canal, we should have had a great deal more fun; we might have been there now. To be sure (lowering his voice) I should not have had the happiness of meeting dear Tom Claremont's charming daughter.

Dorothy (brusquely)—Please do not pay me compliments. Remember I cannot get away from them.

Sir Oscar—I beg your pardon for the hundredth time; and it wasn't a compliment. Did your father teach you to draw?

Dorothy—No; but he encouraged me to draw and to study in the galleries. He thought I should be able to support myself. He knew he could only leave us £150 a year in English money.

Sir Oscar—Good heavens! what one gives for a weight-carrier!

Dorothy—A weight-carrier?

Sir Oscar—A horse that can carry twelve stone over plough. I forgot you are not used to the English we speak at home. Claremont, I am sure, reared you on Shakespere and Ford and Marlowe?

Dorothy—Why do you talk that other English?

Sir Oscar—I don't know why. In the world one gets a sort of jargon. It is the same thing in French; what we say on the Boulevards and in the Cercles would sound like High Dutch to Voltaire or Marmontel or Mme. de Sévigné. Fashion always has its *patois*. You know it is a law to itself.

Dorothy—I know nothing about it. Fashion and I have never been introduced to each other.

Sir Oscar—Might I ask—you spoke of your mother—did my old friend marry an Italian?

Dorothy—My mother is a German; she was Countess Hedwig von Brander. She met my father in Rome. Her own people have refused to know her since her marriage; they leave us quite to ourselves. She is blind.

Sir Oscar—Blind! Good heavens, my poor child!

what have you done to Fate that you should be so persecuted?

Dorothy—Fate might be much more cruel. I have my blessings. My mother is not at all unhappy. She is of the sweetest temper. She has a beautiful voice and sings beautifully. If she could be reconciled to her own people, she would desire nothing more; but they are very hard at heart. They thought the marriage beneath her, because my father was not noble and was poor; but if you knew him, you knew that he was worthy of an empress.

Sir Oscar—Most surely. (Thinks to himself.) So that is where you get your blonde curls and your little air of hauteur. You are a German aristocrat at bottom, though you have Claremont's brown eyes and Claremont's simple good sense. You are really very interesting; and how innocently you accept me for your father's friend, though for aught you know I might be only telling you a heap of falsehoods!

Dorothy (restlessly)—Is it not very strange this custodian does not come? He left me here once until six: but then it was only myself; now he knows you are here.

Sir Oscar—I ought to have refreshed his memory with five francs. But if you are not in a hurry, I am not; if he had come at the regulation hour, I should never have found out you were Claremont's daughter. Now you will let me call on you, won't you?

Dorothy (hesitating)—Yes—I suppose—I don't know—I will ask my mother. She does not wish people to call; she dislikes new acquaintances.

Sir Oscar (sotto voce)—Afraid of the hawks for her dove—one can understand; and she can't see what's going on, poor soul. But I shan't do the child any harm; I should always feel Tom Claremont's ghost after me.

Dorothy (uneasily)—What time is it? Perhaps my watch has stopped.

Sir Oscar—Mine's half-past six, but it may be too fast; I haven't listened to the town clocks lately. Do

tell me more about your father. Did he suffer greatly? Ah! how sad that is! Where did you say he died? At Camaldoli? Where is Camaldoli?

Dorothy—It is a monastery in the hills which has been changed into a hotel; it stands in the midst of pine forests. The physicians ordered him to go to Davos Platz; but we could not afford to move so far. He was so patient, so quiet; it seems only yesterday—please do not speak of it——

Sir Oscar—If only he had accepted my living! It is the living of Rivaux—my own place. I should have seen you as a little child; you would have had all an English child's playtime—archery, lawn-tennis, pony-riding, boating; Rivaux would please you, I think. It's an old Stuart place, buried in very deep woods; you can ride thirty miles on turf. I used to call it beastly dull, but of late I've got fond of it; after the glare and scorch of Egypt last year it looked so cool and green and pleasant I was glad to see it again.

Dorothy—Why are you in Florence in April?

Sir Oscar—Well, because I have the disease of the time; the French call it *pérégrinomanie*. Besides, you know, a man alone—if I were married, I would live more than half my time at Rivaux. As it is, I'm a good deal there.

Dorothy—But if you are a soldier?

Sir Oscar—Oh, yes, I am in the First Life; but that doesn't tire one much. I did go to Egypt; I would go anywhere else, if they sent us anywhere else; but they don't. Sometimes I think your father was right. I ought not to have gone in the Guards; I might have studied, and that sort of thing; instead, I let all my best years slip away in that idle London life which makes one good for nothing else.

Dorothy—Have you no relatives at all? no mother or sister?

Sir Oscar—My mother died long ago; I have two sisters; entirely fine ladies; they don't care a hang about me, nor I a rap about them; they are larky women, both of them, more than I like.

Dorothy—That is the English which is not Shakspere's. What does it mean?

Sir Oscar—It is hardly worth while to tell you. I only meant to say that my sisters both married while I was at Eton, and there is no sort of sympathy between us. Oh, I have lots of relations—about 500; but I see as little of them as possible; they are always wanting something—my county borough, or my lord-lieutenancy, or my tenants' votes, or 100 guineas for a charity; they are always wanting something, if it's only to be asked to dine at Hurlingham.

Dorothy—You are honey, and the flies eat you.

Sir Oscar—Oh, I assure you, I am not honey; I can be very bitter sometimes, especially if I feel people want to get over me.

Dorothy—To get over? That means——?

Sir Oscar—Well, in our language, it means cheat one, use one for their own purposes.

Dorothy—Is it not just as easy to say "cheat" as "get over"?

Sir Oscar—I suppose it would be. That slipshod language is a habit—a bad habit, like smoking cigarettes. I hope you don't smoke, do you?

Dorothy—I! Smoke! I!

Sir Oscar—How dreadfully scandalized you look! I was sure you didn't. If you knew how sick one gets of seeing the women smoke, and making believe they like it, and spoiling their lips and their breath!

Dorothy—I did not know women ever smoked. In what country do they?

Sir Oscar—In that very queer country which you happily have never traversed—Society. If you had smoked, however, I have some cigarettes with me, and it might have made you feel less hungry.

Dorothy—Thanks, I am not hungry, I have eaten my buns. But you must want your dinner terribly, Colonel—Sir Oscar—I am not sure what you are called?

Sir Oscar—My men call me the first; society the second. You can call me whatever you like, so long as

you don't call me *de trop* or impertinent. You did think me impertinent, didn't you?

Dorothy—Yes, a little. You see, when one is working, as I am, one is so much at the mercy of those who pass through; and my mother is always so anxious that I should speak to no strangers. I cannot help answering now and then, because they ask me questions about my work or about the pictures, and sometimes they are very kind and agreeable—sometimes they are rude.

Sir Oscar—I was in the latter category, but I shall never be so again. Your mother is quite right; you are much too—young—to speak to people you see in these places that are open to the public.

Dorothy (gayly)—But when one works for the public.

Sir Oscar—I can't believe you do. I mean, you know, it seems awfully wrong that you should need to work hard, while here am I——

Dorothy—What has that to do with it? There is nothing wrong about it. That is the sort of thing the Communists say; but an English gentleman——

Sir Oscar—May feel ashamed of himself, mayn't he? I mean, you know, that to see a little lady of your years, and your—your appearance—shutting herself up all day and toiling away for her mother, makes one's own selfish, idle, self-indulgent life seem the most hateful thing under the sun.

Dorothy—I do not see it at all. I am not the least bit of a radical. I am sure it is all these inequalities which make life picturesque; if it were all a dead level, there would be no hills to climb, no valleys to repose in; I think it delightful that there should be people rich enough and happy enough to enjoy themselves all their lives long. If I were living near Rivaux, I should be the better for Rivaux every time I walked through it; I should not want to own it. To hear the birds sing, to see the primroses come out——

Sir Oscar (admiringly)—What a philosopher you are! I recognize Claremont's spirit in that admirable unselfishness, in that absolute absence of envy; he was always like that. He came to Rivaux once in my father's

time, and I remember that he enjoyed it just in your spirit; he said he made it his own through his eyes. Are you his only child?

Dorothy—Yes. He taught me all I know. Were I only more like him!

Sir Oscar—I think you are very like him. Perhaps the best gift of all he gave you has been that of his cheerful content and sweet, ungrudging justice to all men. It is such a rare quality in private as in public life; no doubt it is so rare because it is only possible to the highest natures.

Dorothy—How well you understood him!

Sir Oscar—Perhaps I understand him better by my memories of him than I did when I was a lad, too eager to enjoy myself to care much for anything else. If I had followed his examples and his counsels, I should have been a very different man and a much more useful one in my generation.

Dorothy—You have been fighting in Egypt.

Sir Oscar—Is that useful? Well, anybody could have done what I did—lost three charges and hunted down a few poor beasts of fellahs. I made some sketches certainly, but they're not worth much. Those marvellous sunsets, and hard white moons—one could not reproduce them if one were Turner himself.

Dorothy—(in awe)—Did you really kill an Egyptian?

Sir Oscar—I really did—three or four, I believe. One was there to do it, you know.

Dorothy—I suppose it had to be done, as you say; but it is horrible—to see any one sit there—drawing—and to think that they have killed others a few months ago; you cannot fancy how terrible it seems! It frightens me——

Sir Oscar (smiling)—Desdemona was frightened, but she liked it. Women always do like it.

Dorothy—I do not like it.

Sir Oscar—Oh, yes, you do. You are not quite so sincere as usual when you say you don't.

Dorothy (coloring)—Perhaps—I do not know—yes, perhaps in a way I like it. It seems wonderful to think

you have killed men last year and would not hurt me; but still it is terrible to think of——

Sir Oscar—Precisely; it was terrible to Desdemona.

Dorothy (hurriedly)—I don't see—I mean—How very strange it is that the custodian does not come! The light seems growing less; it will soon be dusk.

Sir Oscar (cheerfully)—Of course the old fellow will come when night falls. They are sure to shut the palace up carefully. Do you know I am beginning to believe in fate?

Dorothy—Indeed? Because an Italian door-keeper has forgotten his keys

Sir Oscar—Well, yes, and for other things.

Dorothy (with a little embarrassment)—A custodian, for instance, who keeps one without luncheon and makes one late for dinner! Well, it is to be hoped he is not met with every day. You must be very hungry, Sir Oscar.

Sir Oscar—I am, I grant; but it don't matter; we were awfully hungry at times in Egypt. The cook was all there, but the food wasn't. Here we are like those poor brutes that the Chinese kill by hanging them up in a cage in sight of a meat-shop. There is food all around us in Florence, but we can't get at it. There is a kind of scent of dinner in the air, isn't there?

Dorothy—I hardly perceive it. Do you hear the nightingales in Boboli?

Sir Oscar—Ah! you see that is the difference between our ages. Sunset to you suggests nightingales, and to me dinner.

Dorothy—But you must hear the nightingales. Listen!

Sir Oscar—Very pretty. Where are they?

Dorothy—In Boboli, the gardens yonder. Are your gardens at Rivaux equal to ours, with their dark ilexes and their moss-grown marbles?

Sir Oscar—They are another sort of garden altogether. Italian gardens are meant for moonlight nights, and Romeo and Juliet, and perhaps a dagger glistening somewhere under the white lilies; ours are

made rather for sunny afternoons and lawn-tennis, and tea in Worcester cups, and Kate Greenaway's little girls, and all kinds of cigars. There is an old Dutch garden though at Rivaux, very prim and shady, and full of sweet-scented flowers, which might please you, and where you would sit under clipped walls of box and read old Herrick. Do you think you will come to England this year?

Dorothy—This year! We never go there or anywhere. I have never even seen England. I was born here.

Sir Oscar—Florence has been always a fortunate city. I should be glad if you and your mother would come to Rivaux. I have lots of ladies who honor me there.

Dorothy (laughs a little)—Fancy me in my gray gown among a number of grand people! Do you know I have never been to a party of any kind in all my life, nor to any theatre, even though we are in the land of Mimi?

Sir Oscar—How delightful! How I should like to be the first to drive you down the Champs Elysées at the *retour du Bois*, or take you on a Saturday to Hurlingham or Ranelagh, and to the opera afterward! I wonder if it would strike you as bewilderingly enchanting or preposterously absurd. Sometimes the whole thing seems to me the hugest farce under the sun.

Dorothy—Listen! (The nightingales sing louder in the gardens on the other side of the court below.)

[The big bell of St. Maria dei Fiori rings for the Ave Maria.]

Dorothy (rising with agitation)—That is the Ventitre! and they do not come! What shall I do? Whatever will my mother think? Can we make no one hear?

Sir Oscar—Won't the nightingales console you?

Dorothy—Oh, pray do not make a jest of it! Only think how wretched my mother will be, expecting me hour after hour—I am never later than five—and nobody is with her but our stupid Teresina; and they do not dream I am here, because I went out to paint in the Spanish cloister and came here instead because the church was shut up. Oh, cannot you make them hear?

Do call—shout out—as if you were telling the Life Guards to charge!

Sir Oscar—I will do my best. I do shout a good deal, especially on a field-day, and still more when my yacht's shipping heavy seas and the skipper's a duffer; here goes! [Leans out of the window and halloos; there is no response save from an echo.]

Dorothy (in despair)—No one hears! Oh, how terrible it is! What ever can I do?

Sir Oscar—I fear there is nothing to be done. I would get down the wall somehow or another, but these confounded French windows—French windows in an Italian palace!—are too narrow for me to squeeze through them; you see, unluckily, I'm the big Guardsman, of *Punch's* pictures. If I only knew what to do! I'm afraid I must bore you horribly.

Dorothy—Oh, no! you are so kind, and I am so selfish. I forgot how you must want your dinner.

Sir Oscar—That is a minor ill; I have been hungry ere now, and have survived it. What concerns me is the worry for yourself and your mother at home. Of course it will end all right; we are not shut up here to endure the fate of the Ugolini; somebody will come some time; but meantime you must be beginning to hate the sight of me.

Dorothy (naïvely)—No, indeed, you have made me forget the time; you have been very kind. I should feel much more frightened if I were left alone.

Sir Oscar (to himself)—How sweetly she says that! and not an idea of any suspicion of me. Good heavens! what capital Nessie Hamilton, or any of them, would have made out of this as a "situation." What affected fears they would have got out of it! This child only thinks that her mother is crying at home, and that I want my dinner. (He makes a tour of the three apartments which are open, and returns.) I have tried to force each of the doors, but they defy me. There is no exit of any sort possible. What can I do? You know the place. Command me. I will do the possible and the impossible.

Dorothy (growing pale)—I think there is nothing you can do, as you can make no one hear. It is quite inexplicable. The man must have drunk too much and gone to sleep—it is nearly dark.

Sir Oscar—How those nightingales do go on! their little voices penetrate where mine is lost—the superior power of sweetness over volume. It looks darker than it is outside, because of all these tapestries. To think you have had nothing to eat all day!

Dorothy—I do not mind that. I often eat nothing all day. Would you like to smoke? I think you said you had cigars.

Sir Oscar—Well, I'll go and light up in the next room to show you how I appreciate your kindness. (He goes and smokes and reflects). On my honor, if there be such a thing as love at first sight, I am in love! After all, what could one find better than Tom Claremont's daughter? He was the finest fellow that ever lived, beggared himself for the sake of being honest to his church and loyal to his opinions; he was a scholar and a gentleman, every inch of him. If I've anything decent in me, it is to Claremont that I owe it. I was a horrid little spoiled bumptious ass when I went to him, and he made a man of me. If I fell away from his teachings afterward, it was nobody's fault but my own. She is infinitely charming, she is so utterly innocent, and yet you can see she could hold her own very bravely. What a pretty voice, too! and what a complexion, like a roseleaf! After all, Piver can't give them anything that looks like the real thing. I wonder what she would say if she were told I thought of her seriously—box my ears, I fancy, metaphorically. It sounds awfully ridiculous, when I've been afraid of being caught by women ever since I was twenty, and when I've seen her just a few hours ago in this room; but I think one might do worse. I'd always an idea of finding somebody out of the common run; I'm that sick of all our women, they are so terribly alike; and then, you know, those girls would marry the devil himself if he made good settlements. Now, this one, I

believe she'd go on painting linen to the end of her days rather than sell herself. What immense fun it would be to show her the world! I'm sure she's got it in her to enjoy herself; shut up with a blind mother, and forced to drudge in galleries for her livelihood, she must be like a bird in a cage. If one had her with one, and just took her to Paris, and gave Worth *carte blanche*, what a picture she'd be in a month! and it would do one good to hear her laugh; yet I think she'd hate it all, and like to get to the greenery and the roses down at Rivaux—at least, I fancy so. I fancy she'd always like the country best, and perhaps she'd like riding; she's the figure that ought to ride well. Good heavens! to be tied down here in the heat, painting saints and goddesses and landscapes on cloth for a lot of dealers and Yankees! It is atrocious! Andromeda and the rock was nothing to it! And so brave, and so quiet and so grateful as she is about it, and only thinking of her mother, never a bit of herself. It seems a shame to make love to her, shut up alone with me as she is; it would only frighten her, and it's growing dark as pitch. It will be very horrid for her; one must not say anything that would scare her, it would be too unfair. (He throws the end of the cigarette into a corner and looks around the room.) If only one could find a bit of light, it would comfort her; it's odious for her, poor child! to be alone with a stranger like this. If she weren't so unsuspicious, she would think I'd bribed the custodian. (Sees on a marble console an end of wax candle; takes it and goes to her.) Here's an atom of wax candle; I found it in that inner room. I'll try and light it, though I've only fusees, and stick it in one of those candelabra; it will be better than nothing. Perhaps they will see a light in those windows and come up, some of them. There! A feeble illumination, but still it will serve to keep ghosts away. If they imprison people here, they ought to leave a lamp or two, and something in the cupboard to eat. Pray don't be alarmed at—at—about anything, Miss Claremont. I'll go in the furthest room,

if you like, and you can pile the furniture between us——

Dorothy (simply)—Why should I do that? I should be more alarmed if I were alone. I am a little—just a little—afraid of being in the dark. My father was always angry with me for being so; he said it was to distrust nature, to limit the power of God; of course it is, if one reasons about it; but one can't always reason; at least I can't.

Sir Oscar—No pretty woman ever should! Don't be angry with me. It slipped out unawares. You see, it was such a natural reply to you. (Thinks to himself.) You are adorable! I don't think I've led a very decent life; but no old woman could be more careful of you than I will be. What a blackguard world it is! (Aloud.) Hark at your nightingales! Did your father ever recite to you Ford's "Lutist and Nightingale"? I almost think it is the finest poem in the English language.

Dorothy—It is very beautiful—I know it by heart. Only there is one fault in all the poets when they write of nightingales. They speak of *her* as sad. Now it is *he* who is most joyous.

Sir Oscar—To be sure; you are quite right. That blunder comes from Ædon! Hark at them! What a flood of song! What rivalry!

Dorothy—Do they sing like that in England?

Sir Oscar—I think not.

Dorothy—Perhaps in England they cannot see their notes; there are no fireflies to light them! (She meets his glance, and colors, and looks away.) Tell me all about Egypt; that will pass the time. I am so fond of stories; my father used to tell me so many.

Sir Oscar—Ah, I haven't your father's talent. I've talked what you call bad English so many years that I've lost all power of speaking in the sort of language you like. I can tell you what I saw myself, but I'm afraid I shall tell it ill. The thing that hurt me most was the death of poor Black Douglas, my best horse. I bred him myself at Rivaux six years ago; an Arab

stabbed him in a thicket of reeds, and he carried me five miles home, to the camp, with the knife sticking in him, and then dropped. [He tells her about Egypt for half-an-hour; the bells sound half-past eight; it grows dark outside; the candle burns low.]

Sir Oscar (aloud)—That fellow hasn't twenty minutes more life in him; perhaps there are some other bits of wax somewhere. Kassassin do you say? Oh, no, it wasn't anything wonderful; it was a *mêlée;* we cut and thrust, and charged and recharged, but we didn't know very well what we were doing. It is always so with us English, you know; we get into the thing as if it were polo, and we get out of it, God knows how. I wish we could get out of this. I'm sure I wish we could, for your sake—you begin to look so tired. It's quite shocking for you to have gone all day on those two buns, and not even a drop of water.

Dorothy—If I could let my mother know I am safe! She will imagine every dreadful accident under the sun, and they will never think to come here—at least, I fear not.

Sir Oscar—Perhaps they may, later on; I always fancied there was nothing money couldn't do for one, but this is certainly a facer. (He thinks.) I should like to tell her all I think of her; but I suppose it would be brutal when she is shut up like this; it might frighten her; she wouldn't understand. On my honor, I never felt so inclined to marry a woman before! but she might be frightened or angry; she can't get away from me; it won't do to embarrass her. It's likely enough we shan't get out till morning; it will be awfully cruel for her. What a tale they'd make of it in the clubs, if it were to get wind! I suppose they'd chaff me and call me Scipio for the rest of my days.

Dorothy (with distress)—How can they possibly treat me like this!—they know me so well, I come here so continually. Of course it is not like the galleries, which they must close; but still they ought to shut up the palace at sunset.

Sir Oscar—They have forgotten this particular corner of it. Pray don't fret; if I could get them to come by breaking my neck, I assure you I shouldn't hesitate a minute; but when I can't get out of any one of the windows—there are moments, and these are one of them, in which one feels that it may occasionally be better to be a midget than a giant.

Dorothy—If you could get out of the windows, you could do nothing; they are an immense height.

Sir Oscar—I would chance it for your sake.

Dorothy (smiling)—Or—to dine?

Sir Oscar—That is very cruel. Have I shown any remembrance that I have not dined? Indeed, after that cigarette which you so kindly allowed me, I am quite refreshed, body and spirit. But that you should not even have a glass of water distresses me infinitely.

Dorothy (the tears coming to her eyes)—Oh, all that does not matter in the least. It is to think how unhappy my poor mother must be! And you know everything is so much worse to those who are blind. They feel they can do nothing.

Sir Oscar (moves restlessly)—Pray, pray, don't cry. I never can stand seeing a woman cry. I know it's awful for you, and one feels such a fool not to be able to do something. Perhaps I could smash the door if I put my shoulder to it. Shall I try?

Dorothy—No, I think you could not move it; these doors are so strong; and they would put you in prison afterward.

Sir Oscar—I would chance that. If it won't frighten you, I'll try if I can't smash the panels in; I'm about as strong as most men. I see nothing else for it. Here goes!

Dorothy—Oh! pray don't; you may hurt yourself, and they will be so angry.

Sir Oscar (smiling)—My dear, I'm more likely to hurt the wall. The worst of it is, that these things they made in the Dark Ages are so confoundedly well made that they'd almost resist artillery. If it were a door in my house in London, we'd send it flying into

splinters in two seconds. Stand out of the way, and let me have a try before the candle goes out; you won't mind my taking my coat off?

Dorothy (thinks to herself)— How kind he is, and how good, and how strong! I feel as if I had known him all my life. If he should hurt himself!—if the door were to fall on him!

Sir Oscar (looking at her)—Why, how pale you are! Do you think the thing will tumble on me like the gates of Gaza? Pray don't be frightened. I thought you were such a cool, courageous little lady. I assure you the only damage done will be to these very handsome panels, and money will repair that. Now, see here, I'm going to try. Will you please stand out of the way, and hold that candle while I try? Here goes! [Puts his shoulder to the door; heaves and pushes vainly for ten minutes; pauses to take breath]

Dorothy (with clasped hands)—Oh, pray do not try it, you will hurt yourself; you must be bruised and strained already; and if you did knock it down, they would put you in the Bargello. You know this is the King's palace!

Sir Oscar (laughing)—They won't behead me; perhaps they'll behead the custodian. Don't think I'm going to give in; I haven't got safe out of Egypt only to go down before a wooden door. (He tries again, and sends the panels flying in splinters.) There! I knew I should beat the confounded thing. Now you are free, my bonny bird! Will you run down the stairs and leave me here, or will you prefer me to go and call them?

Dorothy—Oh, how strong you are! How beautiful to be as strong as that!

Sir Oscar (smiling)—Hercules always wins by a head with you ladies. That unhappy door! it is only good to split up for matches; but I know Pannissera; he'll make it all square. Why, you are paler than you were before! What is the matter?

Dorothy (gathering up her colors and brushes)—I am only so glad, and it seems so wonderful to be as

strong as you are! You rent the door as I should paper.

Sir Oscar—Not quite; it took me fifteen minutes. Don't be in such a tremendous hurry. I—I—want to ask you something.

Dorothy—I cannot wait a moment, indeed I cannot. I shall run all the way home. It must be nearly nine o'clock. Think of mamma!

Sir Oscar—Yes; but I want a word, just a word, with you first, before any one comes up stairs. They must have heard that row down below. Do wait one second; you can run off afterward as soon as you please; but I must say it, if I die for it. Half a day like this counts more than half a year. Don't you think so? I don't know what you feel about me, I can't hope that you feel anything; but what I feel is just this—you please me more than any woman that ever lived. Will you come and live at Rivaux—as my wife? By George, there is the candle gone out! well, it served our time. My dear little love, don't be frightened; will you give me your hand? We will feel our way downstairs. But before we go out, do answer me.

Dorothy (agitated)—It is quite dark!

Sir Oscar—It is quite dark, but the nightingales find their tongues in the darkness, and so can you.

Dorothy—We must speak to the custodian.

Sir Oscar—We must certainly speak to the custodian—at least, I will, and forcibly—but first, please speak to me. Of course, you know very little about me, but your mother shall know everything. All you have to do, my dear, is to tell me you don't dislike me!

Dorothy—Dislike you?

Sir Oscar—May I take you home?

Dorothy (in a whisper)—If you wish.

Corsica is celebrated as the land of tragedy. Here is a characteristic drama of that strange land. It has been translated from the French for ROMANCE by Harriette Billings.

A CORSICAN EPIC.

CORSICA is, it would appear, still the home of the epic: the Corsicans have it in their blood.

Since the time of Merimée, has there been a tourist in that singular island who has not brought back some dramatic story having a characteristic "color"? They are not merely adventures of bandits and "vendette"; the sentiment of honor easily leads down there to strange excesses.

M. Emile Bergerat, who, during his travels in that interesting country, has become greatly interested in it, has just published one of these peculiar dramas, in which a family constitutes itself a tribunal, and an implacable one, against one of its guilty members.

It is the adventure, with a tragic *denouement*, of a Preceptor—the result of an indiscretion committed by him.

It is well known that the dream of every Corsican is to become an office-holder: this unfortunate man had succeeded in getting himself appointed Preceptor of a small canton. He was married and had two children, and for a long time his life had been particularly regular.

What change took place in him? To what evil inspiration did he yield? We know not; but the fact remains that this Preceptor, who had, up to that time, been perfectly honest, one day yielded to a fatal temptation. Having pressing need of money, he borrowed some hundreds of francs from the funds entrusted to him.

The embezzlements, which were insignificant, were only suspected. One day an Inspector of Finances,

who was not looked for until later, presented himself to verify the accounts. The poor man tremblingly brought out his books. The discovery of what was wrong was not long in coming; moreover, the man did not seek to defend himself. He broke down, feeling himself lost, and made a complete confession; then, losing his head, he fled from home and disappeared in the mountains.

The eldest son of the Preceptor, a youth of sixteen, but singularly resolute and decided for his age—returned home just at this time. He was made acquainted with the situation by his mother, whom he found in tears. He turned very pale, but said nothing except—

"How much is missing from the cash-box?"

The Inspector informed him of the amount of the deficit; the young man thanked him, and made an appointment with him for the following morning.

"To-morrow morning," said he, "the box will be in its proper condition."

He took his gun—that gun, without which one cannot imagine a Corsican of the interior—and went out, bidding his mother take courage, and assuring her that dishonor should not enter that abode where honesty had always dwelt.

At the appointed hour the Inspector of Finances—a functionary originally from Paris, who was much interested in the manners of the country where he was a new-comer—found himself at the rendezvous. He had not long to wait.

Very soon, in fact, the young man and the Preceptor himself appeared, the latter pale, weak, his countenance haggard, and with the air of a prisoner.

His son had hunted him out in the mountains and brought him back by force, after having passed the night in getting together among his relatives and friends the sum that was missing; they had all contributed without hesitation to make it up—although they were poor—in order to escape a scandal. The son threw the money upon the table, begged the Inspector

to count it, then demanded of him what action he would take next.

The sum having been promptly reimbursed, the Inspector declared that all was as it should be, that he held the culprit acquitted, and that he would not prosecute him. Then he withdrew, troubled in spite of himself at the sombre attitude of this boy of sixteen years.

If he had known what was to take place after his departure! Up to this point it is a commonplace story enough; but here is where it begins to be terrible.

The Preceptor thanked his son for having saved him, but his joy was of short duration. One of his people enjoined him to descend to the hall of his dwelling: he found there all his family assembled. He was to be judged by his own kindred, if not by the courts.

There was not the slightest indecision. His son spoke in the name of all; he simply said to him:

"Do you wish to pay a visit to the tomb of your mother?"

"But it is not the anniversary of her death."

There was a moment of solemn silence.

"Then go up to your room and finish what you have to do, while we pray for your soul."

The Preceptor understood; he was condemned to death: he must kill himself.

"You have an hour before you," they added.

The unfortunate man turned beseechingly toward his wife; she turned away her head.

It was all over! He must meet his fate, resign himself to the sentence pronounced against him. He could not hope for pardon. He bowed his head, cast a despairing look upon those whom he loved, with whom he had lived, and slowly mounted to his chamber.

The family remained kneeling in silence. At the theatre such a scene would assuredly be profoundly dramatic; judge then of what it must be in real life.

A half-hour passed in anxious waiting; no sound was heard save the steps of the condemned man on the floor above, as he paced feverishly to and fro.

Suddenly he called. He wished to embrace his

little daughter, a child of six or seven years old. Her brother, the pitiless judge, sent the child to him. The Preceptor kept her with him about twenty minutes; then a voice cried to him that the time granted him was about to expire, and commanded the little girl to come down.

The young man, impassive in appearance, kept his eyes fixed on the clock. The women wept, but the idea never occurred to any of them to protest against the authority of him whom they now regarded as the head of the family.

Finally the hour began to strike. At this moment a shot was heard; the condemned man had executed himself; he had put a bullet through his head.

The boy then threw down his own gun, which he had been holding in his hands—for if his father had hesitated, he would not have failed to kill him himself: honor demanded it!

From this moment the attitude of this sixteen-year-old judge changed; now that honor was saved, his sensibilities reasserted themselves, and he could weep for the father whom he had doomed to death in expiation of the fault he had committed. He manifested, in fact, the same grief he would have felt had he who had just died not been his victim. He was particular that the obsequies should be imposing, and followed the cortége without seeking to dissemble his sorrow, yet without remorse. According to his creed he had accomplished his duty, however cruel it might be.

What a strange country where such diverse sentiments are possible! "Corsica is still in the period of Columbus," said M. Bergerat, in recounting this tragic story. That is only too plain.

The following extraordinary coincidence has been written out for ROMANCE by Miss Lydia Hodgson, who vouches for every statement of the story as true.

A "REMARKABLE RECOVERY."

I RARELY dream, but when I do, everything is so startlingly real as to render it almost impossible for me to shake off the effects for several hours after waking. The dream related below is not wonderful in itself, perhaps, but the coincidence connected with it certainly is, and I cannot account for it, unless it is true that the mind of one person exercises an influence over that of another, even though the two are a long distance apart.

. . . . . .

One night last week I dreamed that I was in a strange city. It was about eight o'clock in the evening. I was travelling alone through streets that I had never been in before. I did not seem to know, as I hurried along, exactly what my errand was, but suddenly I halted before a three-story-and-basement brownstone house, scanned it hastily, seemed satisfied that it was the place I was to stop at, ascended the stoop, found the door slightly ajar, and went in without ringing the bell. I turned to the right, drew aside the portière at the front-parlor door, and stepped into the room, which was dimly lighted. The parlors were very deep and rather narrow. Several people were standing, about talking in undertones.

To the left of the doorway at which I stood was an upright piano. In a line with it to the right of the doorway was a black-draped bier, with a white marble slab on top of it. Lying on the slab, her feet toward the window, was the body of a woman. I approached the bier and looked at her. I knew then, and not until then, that I was in the home of my editor-friend, Mr.

B., in Philadelphia, and that the woman lying on the bier was his mother, although I had never seen her. No one told me that it was so; I seemed to know it intuitively. She appeared to be not more than thirty-five years of age—she is in reality past fifty—and was beautiful. She looked as if she were asleep. Her face was slightly flushed, and her lips were quite red. She was dressed in her wedding robe—some kind of cream-colored material, lace-trimmed.

"How lovely she is!" I commented inwardly. "And how greatly her son will miss her!" I stood beside her for some moments, then left the room and went upstairs, where I removed my hat and cloak.

The front room was fitted up as a sitting-room, the back as a sleeping-room. Several of my friends were there, also many people whom I had never seen before. They were all having a pretty jolly time and were laughing and chatting as merrily as if the occasion was one of rejoicing, instead of one of mourning. I was quite indignant, and asked them to please be quiet, as the funeral service had begun. There was silence at once, and all flocked into the hall to listen.

By that time the stairway and halls were crowded with people. I could not hear what was said very well for some time, but when the Lord's Prayer was repeated by the clergyman, at the close of the service, I heard every word of it as distinctly as ever I heard it uttered in church. When he had finished, the friends of the deceased passed the bier to take a last look at her, and some of them left the house immediately after doing so. Finally, my turn came, and I stood beside the bier once more. I could not remove my gaze from that face; something about it fascinated me. As I looked, I saw her eyelids quiver. I said to some one near at hand, "I don't believe she is dead; she cannot be. I surely saw her move."

A few seconds later her lips parted, then closed again. A second time they moved, as if she were talking, but no sound came. Those who stood about her watched more and more intently. Suddenly she opened her

eyes, turned her head slightly, then closed her eyes again. Another lapse of a few minutes ensued; then, with a great effort, and as if the struggle was finally ended, she started up and exclaimed, "Oh! I am *so* glad it is over!" Some one asked her what she meant. "The trance," she replied. No one seemed very much surprised, and two or three who were nearest assisted her from the bier and placed her in an easy-chair.

Just after she was seated, a woman stepped from behind the lace curtains, walked to the centre of the room, and said, "Let us sing 'Praise God, from whom all blessings flow.' I think we ought, because of this *remarkable recovery.*" Instantly some one opened the piano, played the prelude to the Doxology, and all present sang it earnestly. When it was ended, the occasion was in reality one of rejoicing, and one after another went to where Mrs. B. sat and congratulated her upon her resurrection, as it were. She accepted their congratulations gracefully, but seemed disappointed about something. Some one asked her if anything was troubling her. She said: "Yes, I want my son! I do not see him! Where is he?" Several times during the evening I had heard different ones remark how strange it was that Mr. B. was not present at his mother's funeral. She would not be comforted, but asked for him again and again, and looked longingly towards the door, as if certain that he would appear—but he came not.

. . . . . .

I awoke, as usual, at about 7 o'clock. The dream haunted me. I could not get it out of my mind. I lived it all over again from beginning to end. I saw that same strange street, the house, the bier, the body, the people, the clergyman, and all that followed, as plainly as I had seen them in my dream.

I had finished dressing and was about to descend to breakfast when my sister Grace came into my room and handed me a letter and a paper. I started—I could not help it—and nearly dropped both. They were from Mr. B. I had not heard from him for five or six

weeks; in his last previous letter he had not mentioned his mother, and I had wondered many times whether or not she had rallied from an attack of paralysis which she had had some time before.

With the dream still fresh in my mind, I was certain there was news of her in that letter. I opened it, and almost the first sentence I saw was, "My mother has had a most *remarkable recovery*, although she will always be an invalid." The words "remarkable recovery" were underscored. I could scarcely believe my senses. They were the very words used by the woman who stepped from behind the curtains and spoke to the friends and relatives of Mrs. B., in my dream.

. . . . . .

Perhaps a psychologist could explain the above satisfactorily, to himself at least, but as I have never studied the subject, I cannot.

The following powerful scene, the origin of one of Verestchagin's strongest battle-pieces, is from the pen of Georges Le Faure, and is translated for ROMANCE by Isabel Smithson.

THE RUSSIAN'S VISION.

THE battle had begun at daybreak, and the roar of cannon had deafened the echoes for leagues around. For several hours Russians and Turks had disputed the ground, but at last the Russian battalions had weakened, and the Czar's flag had retreated before the standard of the Sultan.

Now all was quiet, and the thick veil of smoke, which hung over the battle-field like a pall, was gradually rent asunder and borne slowly off to the horizon. The ground was covered with corpses, crushed, mangled, mutilated, and from this immense holocaust there rose, now and again, a cry of agony or a hollow moan, as a wounded man pleaded for death, or a dying one greeted it.

The torrid heat of noonday filled the air; not a breath of wind was stirring. From the woods near by came the plaintive note of a bird, the innocent victim of human hate, mourning for its brood which had been destroyed in the nest by a gun-shot.

Two shadowy human forms came stepping slowly over the dead bodies, and slipping on the blood-wet grass. One of these wore a cassock with silver embroidery which glittered in the sunlight; he carried a golden censer, his head was bare, his eyes were downcast, and his lips were moving in prayer. This was a Russian priest, and behind him walked a soldier, carrying a book and a silver cross. They stopped suddenly, and the priest was filled with pity at sight of so much suffering, but the stolid soldier began piling up some knapsacks to form an altar, on which he laid the book and the cross. Then he removed his hat, and the priest,

spreading out his arms to include the whole ghastly field in his benediction, recited the office of the dead, as calmly and solemnly as if he were in the great cathedral of St. Petersburg. The soldier made the responses, a few feeble voices joining with his strong tones, and the wounded Mussulmans lying near raised their heads in wonder to see the Christian praying to his God for them. Then the priest swung the censer, slowly turning to the four quarters of the earth and sending up a cloud of incense. His thoughts rose with it, and he asked of the Almighty why it was that the Christian Russians had been vanquished by the followers of Mahomet. Suddenly he received the answer to his question.

The battle-field faded from his sight, and he saw burning villages, soldiers slaughtering women and children without mercy, harvests destroyed—a nation annihilated. For a minute the Russian priest stood motionless; then he groaned aloud, fell upon his knees, and, stretching his arms toward heaven, cried out, "Poland! Poland! O God, hast thou not yet forgiven?"

Here is a characteristic sketch by Octave Thanet, whose representations of life in Arkansas have given her wide and deserved fame. "His Father's Own Son" first appeared in the *Home-Maker*. The touching motive of the story is one which impelled scores, perhaps hundreds, of kind-hearted negroes to good deeds during the years immediately succeeding the war. "I must give dis cow to my massa's folks. Dey needs it 'nough sight more'n we-uns do," said one, leading his only cow into his old master's door-yard and leaving it there. His wife did not think so, and beat him cruelly when he came home without the cow. But the poor fellow stood firm. The cow remained where he had left it, to the salvation of "de quality" in the house.

HIS FATHER'S OWN SON.

THUMP! Thump! Thump!

The strokes echoed through the forest; hatchet-strokes plainly, but as plainly not hatchet-strokes upon a nail or anything of metal; that dull thud of the impact must come from wood. Wood it was that was struck swiftly by the head of Jinny Brutus' hatchet. She was pounding a white-oak sapling to make strips for cotton-baskets.

She knelt amid the heap of curly white shavings, a slender brown girl in a clean blue-and-white cotton frock; with dazzling eyes and teeth.

Presently the noise ceased. Jinny sat down and began weaving.

"Laid out fo' t' make 'em this evenin'," she muttered; "but reckon they yent time; I does wonder how come papa stay so long."

While she spoke, her lithe brown fingers were darting through the white bands; there was nobody along the river-bank who could weave cotton-baskets like Jinny.

Already, the river glittered behind the tiny, star-shaped leaves of the gum-trees. Long shadows stretched from the feet of the huge trunks until they mingled with other shadows of the wood. The gum-

tree bark was silver-gray, with something of the shine and texture of a coat-of-mail. Glossy green leaves of water-oaks caught the sunshine on their smooth sides. nearer Jinny, and the slanting rays painted the yellow blossoms with brighter hues. Brighter and richer, also, was the scarlet of the buckeye bills and the vermilion tints of maple blooms and the velvet red of the post-oaks, while all the more radiantly white, the dogwood blossoms stood amid the forest dimness, rank above rank, like innocent young choristers just risen to sing. But no sunshine filtered through the thicket of thorn trees and trumpet-vines into the brake behind Jinny. There, cypresses and tupello gum and hackberry trees, weird, grotesque, tropical, lifted their delicate foliage and fantastic trunks out of the black water. Only, among the shadows were spattered yellow cow-lilies, showing like bits of tinsel.

Jinny's rapid glance was merely to assure herself of the hour. Her basket woven, she stood up and looked towards the glowing West and a cabin outlined against the glow. Her face softened, then, as a woman's will, when she is gazing on her home. The first short green growth covered the corn-fields; the blunted cotton rows (no green on them yet) were freshly turned, there were small leaves on the sycamore trees close to the house, and a variegated verdure in the garden.

Jinny drew a sigh of complacency.

The cabin itself was of hewn logs, the chinks plastered with mud.

A gambrel roof, a "gallery" and huge outside chimneys are features common to most Arkansas cabins; but Noe Brutus' house was larger than common, having four rooms and a "cook-room," though Noe and his daughter Jinny constituted the family.

It was a sinful waste of room, according to black Arkansas notions; but Jinny was held to be "mighty biggitty," and old Noe could refuse her nothing.

A wild honeysuckle climbed the "gallery" posts and blended its graceful shadows with masses of shade from the great sycamore.

Jinny knew that the door swung open; that means nothing in a region where a thief is unknown. Any one was welcome to see the gaudy paper on their walls, the sewing-machine in the corner, the white bed with the fluted pillow-shams, and the gilt vases on the mantel-piece which were a high flight of Jinny's "biggitty" ambition. Everything would be as clean as soft-soap and muscle could make them. The table would be spread for supper.

"Reckon I better be gittin' 'bout home," said Jinny; "cohn-cake t' bake up, an' mos' time fo' papa."

She piled the shavings in the completed basket; then stood, resting it on her hip, for a final look down the river, in the direction from which Noe should approach. The ferry-rope sagged in the water, and the boat lay on the sand below the little town among the hills, where he had gone to sell his eggs and butter and consult Col. Searcy, the lawyer. There was no sign of animation about the shore. Jinny turned quickly at the sound of hoofs.

A horseman came out of the wood. He was not the old negro, but a white man, young, handsome and reckless-looking, with his shabby black frock-coat buttoned about his slim waist, his brown hair curling at the ends, and his gray eyes looking straight forward under level brows. A gay cravat fluttered above a worn flannel shirt, and his boots had holes in them.

"Howdy, Jinny," he called, reining in his horse. "Uncle Noe 'round?"

"Howdy, Mist' Bracelin," answered Jinny. "Naw, sah, he yent come home, sah."

Her manner, while it was respectful, held no trace of the usual exuberant African cordiality.

"Hum," grunted the young man. "Know when he'll be back?"

"Naw, sah," stolidly.

"Where'd he go?"

"He done went t' Powhatan, sah."

"If I go one way, like's not he'll have taken the other."

Jinny proffered no comment or suggestion. The deference of her manner had a subaudition of coldness. While Bracelin now was whistling irritably, and scanning the horizon, wheeling his horse for a better view, she shifted her cotton-basket to the other hip with a distinct air of awaiting his departure. He was "white folks," and she was black; she could not send him about his business, but, evidently, that was what she wanted to do.

He gave a short, quick sigh. Then his bold, restless dark eyes fixed themselves on the little picture before him. "You-all have got things in good shape over yonder," said he, pointing to the house, "but you need a good big barn."

"Yes'ah," said Jinny, without expression.

"A first-class barn made out of lumber, to keep up your cows and the horses in winter. 'Twouldn't cost much."

"Nearly 'bout hundred dollars."

A swift smile flicked across the young fellow's mouth. "I bet you've been thinking of it and ciphering on it," said he. "You can—well, there's a heap of ways of raising money."

"Yes'ah," said Jinny. But she surveyed his figure, from his rusty soft hat to his ragged boots, with a sarcastic gleam in her eye.

He did not notice it, his head being turned a little, the better to see the house.

"Crom would be pleased to the ground with a barn," he continued. "Say, Jinny, when's the wedding?"

Jinny denied herself the relief of a giggle; but she could not restrain a duck of her head and a writhe of her supple shoulders, accompanying her answer:

"Oh, we-all yent fixin' tuh be married yit!"

"Well, let me know in time, and I'll send you a nice present. Tell Noe I was here, will you?—and that I'll come again."

Straightway the horse leaped at the touch of the spur and bounded away into the shadows.

"He suttinly did look distrissid," mused Jinny;

"holes in his boots, an' that thar po' ole coat. *He* give me a weddin' present! Mo' like he come tuh borry some change. My word! what a fallin' fo' Cunnel Bracelin's onlies' son!"

The subject so abounded in moral reflections, of that character which La Rochefoucauld assures us is not displeasing, even when our friends are concerned (and how much less so with our superiors?) that before Jinny was at the end of them her supper smoked on the table. She was roused by the sound of a familiar voice, singing with great unction, and all on one note, a hymn popular among the Black River negroes:

"Oh mohner guv up your hairt t' die!
Den ye shill fin' a new hidin'-place.
I'll go.
When de rocks an' de mountin's dey all fall away,
Den ye shill fin' a new hidin' place.
I'll go."

"Wa'al, honey, heah me. What ye reckon I done got in my riders?"

The singer, who came cantering on a peculiar jog-trot up the yard, was an old black man with grizzled wool and beard and a look of beaming good humor.

Jinny ran to help lift the saddle off the mule which he bestrode. But she must wait until the old man had given "Cha'ley" his measure of cotton-seed before she could put her impatient hands into the saddlebags; for it would rob Noe of a dear delight were they not to untie the strings together.

At last, he came. Then, after the baking-powder and the sugar and the new saucepan and the bag of stick candy, "fuh treat," there emerged a long, round, heavy bundle.

"Wa'al, my lord!" Jinny cried, as the string broke and a cascade of shimmering folds trembled in waves from her hands to the floor.

She laughed and Noe laughed, and Jinny clapped her hands.

"Reckon hit do, hay?" said Noe in glee. It was a cotton gown, but it shone like Miss Mandy Searcy's

new silk dress; there were lovely pink roses and green leaves all over it, and the stuff itself was the color of a cloud hardly gray.

"Ye likes it, honey?" said the father.

"I likes it *fine*," Jinny cried; "but I does hate tuh see you a-spendin' you money on me that-a-way, an' the money on the place comin' due next month."

"Dat yent gwine stop me. Say, honey, I seen Cunnel Jim an' whut ye reckon is we-all got?"

"We does owe on the place one hundred-fifty dollars. Mabbe we got hundred-twenty-five."

"Hundred-eighty-free, fo' de Lawd, honey," shouted Noe, exultantly slapping his thigh. "Dat's de sum, baby. Dem mewlses dey done holp us out pow'ful, way de cunnel sell 'em."

Jinny heaved a deep breath of relief. "Wa'al, I'se glad as glad. Cayn't rightly feel the place is we-alls agin till we git paid out."

The old man was settled at the table by this time, and eating with gusto. His thoughts only half-consciously framed themselves into words.

"Evereye tree on dis place I done plant hit my black self. An' you mummer, she holp me. Holp me build dis house, too. You ben a li'le trick, but ye did crave pow'ful tuh plow de fiel'. Yent ben no clarin', den. We-all jes natchelly did girdle de gum trees an' burn 'em down. An' fust we plow roun' de stomps, an' den de stomps git rotted out, an' we git de bes' field in de bottom. Den—den de boys, dey die up. Dem ben mighty hard times, chile. We buried dem back de big pussimmon tree. Dar's whar you mummer layin', too, waitin' fuh me. Looks like I cudn't live nowhar else nur yeah, Jinny, noways. I mind mighty well how ye wud run tuh dem dar grabes, an' I kin see you li'le b'ar feet gwine *patty*, *patty*, topper dem moun's. Wa'al, 'clare I like fuh tuh see li'le feet longin' tuh we-all, go *patty*, *patty*, topper dem grabes, onct mo'."

"How come ye ben so long?" said Jinny, changing the subject rather abruptly.

Noe came out of his dream, to laugh a little shame-

facedly, in the manner of a man expecting reproval, though at ease in his own conscience. "Oh, wa'al, honey, I ben holpin' de widder Lamb pack up water fum de ribber—"

"De widder Lamb!" screamed Jinny. "Mymy, mymy! she tells lies 'bout Crom an' me wherev' she goes out, an' callin' you a ole saphead, an'—an'——"

"Ya'as, ya'as, my baby, I knowed dat av proved a hardness agin 'er wid you-all," the old man said soothugly; "but ye know she does be mighty ole, now, an' nare critter tuh holp 'er 'cept dat po' boy got a fittiness. An' he ben layin' down dis berry ebenin', not fitten tuh do a stroke er wuk, an' she ben totin' dem big pails—looked like I ben 'bleeged tuh holp er."

Jinny remarked grimly that *she* "wudn't of pahted lips with her." "She yent so much guv howdy when we meet up," said Jinny.

"'Wa'al, she suttinly does got de rheumatics turrible bad," old Brutus continued, mildly.

Something in the nature of a sniff was Jinny's sole retort. Like most soft-hearted people, Uncle Noe was tacitly guarded by his family, that is, Jinny and Cromwell Hoyt, whom she was to marry. Either Jinny or Crom would be accounted to have a generous, kindly nature; but Uncle Noe was so brimming over with charity (in word, deed and thought) that both the others cultivated hardness of heart and suspicion in order to keep him within bounds. This very mortgage on the place, now, had it not come because Noe must "go security" for a "triflin'" friend?

Next month the last installment of the mortgage would be due; but, thanks to a good cotton year, the money was ready.

Jinny watched her father smoking after supper. "Did I ben *you*," said she, "I go pay Mist' Harris, right straight."

"Fuh w'y, Jinny?"

"Well, folks say he wants money, right bad, an' mabbe he'd let ye off some so ye paid sooner."

The rings of smoke curled above Uncle Noe's contemplative head.

"Pears like dat don't be ezactly right. Makin' a profit outen his needcessities."

"I don't guess he'd be slow makin' a profit outen yourn. Law me, he'd sell us up 'fore we cud bat our eye, ef we didn't got that money ready."

"You tew ha'sh, Jinny; dat man sorter turn sour kase de folkses all so hard on 'im. Say he yent got no manners; but he allers does guv me howdy, pleasant nuff, I obsarbes. But den—dat's so; he does want money, an' 'clare' I'd like fuh tuh feel dis place we-all's sho' nuff. I'll go, Jinny."

The words gave Jinny a great relief. She had a haunting fear lest someone, *something*, might get the money away from her father.

"I 'spicion that Bracelin," so ran her thoughts. "He's ayfter some of it, sho'. Riches got wings, the Scripter says. It's kinder awful to be rich an' have t' be 'spicionin', all the time!"

As if it were a distorted echo of her suspicion, her father's next speech was about Bracelin.

"Dey-all ben tellin' me," said he, "iz 'ow young Mist' Bracelin ben studdy fuh right smart. Say he putt all de money he ken raise enter some zinc mines en de hills. Doan' drink no mo', nur play kyards, nur nuthin'. Say he ben waitin' on Cunnel Jim's da'ter, Miss Mandy, de one dat sings."

"De Cunnel mus' be plum crazy t' 'low 'im!" said Jinny.

"He does be unner a bad character," Uncle Noe admitted with a sigh, "but, honey, dat ar boy yent bad. I 'sures ye he got a heap er his paw en 'im; an' dar nebber ben a better man dan de ole Cunnel come tuh Arkansaw. I'd orter know, I done ben raised by dat fambly. An' when I come yeah, yent he guv me p'ar mewlses tuh git staht? He pintedly did holp me. Ye cayn't member 'im honey. He did got de nices' twurn* wid him; laffin' an' funnin'—allus cyar so much mis-

*Turn—way.

chief wid 'im. Laws, de hunts we ben on t'gedder, b'ar-hunts an' wil'-hoeg-hunts an' deer-hunts! How he ride! How he shoot! Dat-a-way de boy he fader's own son. Go so fas' I skacely cud keep up tuh 'im. But I done it."

The old man bent his elbow and shook his leg with a melancholy smile. "Dey nebber be limber like dat 'gen, fuh sho'. Wa'al, onyhow, I got a power er satis-faction outen dem wilst dey ben limber, dat's de truf. I done tole ye 'bout de dances an' de to-dos we-all hab in ole Alabam fo' we come tuh Arkansaw. What a manshone dat ar ben! ye caynt hab no right idy."

"An' now his onlies' chile has his boots tied up with paw-paw byark," said Jinny. She was moved to add something of a moral and philosophical cast, but could think of nothing better than: "That thar suttinly *are* curis!"

Noe hardly heard her, wrapped as he was in his visions of an unrecognizable past.

"We ben like brudders," he mumbled, "ole mars an' me. All 'is cloze fit me *puffick!* En'jurin' de wah he ben so spirity, twicet I done fin' 'im on de battle-fiel', mos' killed up. An', afterwards, w'en de money all gone an' de niggers an' de beastis, look a how he come tuh Arkansaw an' make a heap mo' an' a big planta-tion. Ye seen de big house dey-all useter hab. Naw, dey yent no sich iz him leff now." He smoked a few moments, silently. "But dar's his son, his onlies' son," said he, then, "'clare I do are t'ing on yearth fuh dat boy, I wud so."

Jinny gasped. Was ever such blindness? That tri-fling, drinking, cursing, fighting young Bracelin, who had spent all the "powerer money an' lan'" that his father left him in riotous living, like the wicked son in the Bible, that terrible young man, who, Widow Lamb said, had killed a man at Hot Springs and had been in a dozen "killin' fights"—for her father to still cling to the hope of there being a chance for *him!* It was ap-palling. There was no telling how much money the old man might lend him.

"Dat boy's sense," Noe had said more than once,

"hit does be jis like May cotton, late a plantin', but when it ben planted, hit come a *kickin'* up!"

Very likely he believed (so Jinny was ruefully thinking) that Bracelin was "clean shet en them wicked ways." Not so Noe's daughter. "He's sheemy!" she said to herself, "fixin' tuh fool the Cunnel an' git Miss Mandy. That's him. I yent goin' say word 'bout his comin' by."

But it struck her as a bad omen that, whenever she awoke that night, she should recall her father's words: "'Clare I do are t'ing on yearth fuh dat boy!"

The next day she was up before sunrise. She fed the stock and saddled the mule, besides baking the corn bread and frying the pork and making the coffee, before she called Noe, so eager was she to send him promptly upon his journey. Her spirits mounted at the first clatter of his mule's hoofs on the road. "Now I kin take my comfort an' do up the wash," said she.

Quite good-humoredly, an hour later, stooping over the great iron kettle out-doors, she perceived the spirited horse and the erect shabby rider that she knew so well.

Let him come. Noe was well on his way to Harris' by this time; she could trust herself to put Bracelin off the track. She greeted him civilly.

He seemed more disappointed than before at missing Noe. Where had he gone? Jinny's principles regarding truth were those of her race. She made answer promptly that she 'lowed he mout of gone tuh Portia' an' mout of gone tuh Powhatan. "He ben fixin' tuh trade. Taken some fraish butter an' aigs wid 'im."

True enough, Noe had taken fresh butter and eggs, but they were for a gift to his patron, Col. Searcy.

All the same, with the calm of an approving conscience, Jinny watched Bracelin ride furiously into the woods.

"Ye kin ride you horse till he hollers," she chuckled, "afo' you'll meet up with him *this* day. Laws, won't he git mad projeckin' roun' the Porshy sto's ayfter papa?"

There was time in plenty to finish the washing, and she was hanging the last piece of red flannel on the line, when again she heard the pleasant thud of horse's shoes on the dirt road. She gave the new-comer a side glance and a dazzling flash of white teeth, which he repaid with a lover's greeting the the world over.

He was a good-looking young fellow, a shade lighter tan-color than Jinny, stalwart and tall, and with a gay audacity of bearing which Jinny worshipped in secret. Moreover, he could read and write. He rode one of Col. Searcy's horses, being, in fact, the Colonel's coachman. Crom's first inquiry brought out all the story of the money. They were busily discussing young Bracelin's visits, as an old negress opened the gate. She was a hideous old creature. Her shape was bent and twisted by rheumatism. Her jaws had fallen in over toothless gums, and her sharp chin projected beyond the line of her nose; while her skin was seamed by wrinkles until it looked like a piece of black crackle-ware, and the whites of her large eyeballs had turned yellow with age. The hands which fumbled with the gate-latch were enlarged to deformity at the joints. Her dress was as miserable as her person, consisting of a ragged and soiled cotton skirt, a more ragged woolen waist, and the scrap of an old meal-sack for a turban.

When near enough to see the young people clearly—this was not until she was close to them—she stopped and peered at them under the crooked shadow of her hand. In this attitude she looked even more malignant than ugly. Perhaps she was contrasting her state—old, poor, despised, tormented by disease—with their joyous young love. Directly she tottered down the walk. "Howdy!" she called in a loud, gruff tone.

"My word, hit's the widder Lamb!" cried Jinny. But at once she answered "Howdy," and Crom politely added, "How's all?"

"We're tollable," said the widow. She coughed and held her side with both hands. "Ugh, yent got my breff yet," she panted, "run mos' de way." She was all the while eyeing the two with a morose, reluctant

air and side glances over her shoulder, as if she were doing an errand against her will and tempted to run away. But she continued: "Say, you ole dad come by this mahnin,' I" (a fit of coughing) "I ben totin' trash fuh my fire. Rafe ben puny dis mahnin', an' layin' outside on de grass. An' you paw he did tote me a right smart er good wood fuh my fire, an' guv me bit er fraish butter. An'—ugh; got sicher ketch in my side!—he—he tole me 'bout 'is money an' he do aim pay out dis day. So he ben gone bymeby; an' den Mist' Bracelin he come along, good wile later, an' he ben tuh you-uns an' I seen him talkin' tuh my boy Rafe. All 'bout Unk Noe. Whar's he at? When'd he go? An' so on. Made out like he ben turrible anxious tuh see Unk Noe. Den I 'member iz how I heerd tell Mist' Bracelin he borry money right han' an' leff; an' I put hit up he aim tuh borry er Unk Noe. De boy tell him all he knows, in cose. Mabbe—ugh—you-uns kin stop hit."

"Ye reckon he aims to borry a right smart of that money?" cried Crom.

"I reckon he git it *all*," the widow replied, grimly.

"Den we-all lose dis place," shrieked Jinny, "de Lawd sabe us! Oh, whar's he at?"

Crom vaulted on his horse. They could not hear his words distinctly, because they were flung back on the wind, as he plunged down the road on the bay, like a brown-and-yellow flash.

He would get the money back, that much they understood, he would get it, anyhow.

The old negress looked after the flying horseman, grinning horribly.

"Do hush! Ain't dat nigger spirity!" she gurgled, smacking her withered lips. "He gwine scorch 'im. Yent mite skeered up. Say, does 'e cyar li'le gun, ye know, Sissy?"

"Oh, I dunno! I dunno!" sobbed poor Jinny. "He'll sho' git killed up. I mus' fly ayfter papa, myself. Thar's the Texan pony."

She ran to find the horse.

"Nebber so much guv' me 'Tanky,'" muttered the other. "Wa'al, I done for de ole man, not dat gaily gell. *She* nebber take no mo' trubbel en her haid dan she kin kick off at her heels! Ugh, dat nigger!"

Nevertheless, she dragged down the saddle from its nail in the "gallery," with her stick; and it was ready for Jinny when she led up the horse.

The girl leaped into her seat. The old woman expected to see her gallop away, but she turned, at an impulse that showed her to be her father's child. "Go in, by," she called, "make youself cup coffee fo' ye go, Mis' Lamb; an' thar's stick er candy on the shelf 'hind the glass—fuh Rafe."

Then the wild horse cleared the "fence palings."

"Laws, laws!" declared the widow Lamb, "I does feel jes wored tuh a frazzle!"

She entered the house, however, and made the coffee and drank it with considerable enjoyment. "It tastes *fine* wid so much sugar!" thought the widow Lamb.

Meanwhile, Jinny was riding in a tumult of fears. To lose the place—the place that they had toiled in the sun and the freeze to buy—her heart turned sick with dread. But if Crom should speak up to Bracelin, the white man always rode armed—so gossip related, and Jinny had a trusting ear for gossip—he would shoot a nigger like a wild pig if he dared "talk sassy." Jinny trembled for Crom. The Black River country is as peaceful a region as there is North or South; but hardly a spot is without its tradition of revenge and carnage in the past. To Jinny, Bracelin was as reckless and cruel as the worst of the dead desperadoes. Still, she had a woman's confidence in her lover. Crom was "pow'ful spry." He could pull Bracelin off his horse before the latter could draw his gun, if he only came upon him unwares. Indeed, this was precisely what Crom was planning.

Distracted, thus, between terror and a trembling hope, Jinny urged on her horse.

"Ef only ye won't be *ill*,* Laz'rus," was her contin-

* Ill, in Southern phrase, means cross, ugly.

ual cry. "Lazarus" was the Texan's name. He was a new horse, and not completely broken. For a time Lazarus galloped along smoothly, obedient to every hint of the rein.

"Oh, if I kin git tuh papa fustis er all," thought Jinny, "he sho' won't len' that money agin me!" She began to pray under her breath: "Oh, good Lawd, lemme git thar! I'll give up makin' cotton baskets Sundays. I knowed I hadn't orter. Hah! huh! You Laz'rus, *whoa?* What ye doin'?"

Alas, she knew very well what Lazarus was doing; he was running away. The bit was in the brute's teeth, and she could no more control him than she could an engine. She saw the tangle of muscadine vine swaying in the wind—that was the end; she lay on the ground; her head felt as if it were in pieces all about her, and Lazarus' hoofs were twinkling rods away through the bright leaves.

"Reckon I got ter run it," was all the poor girl said. She staggered to her feet and ran on. There were no distinct ideas in her aching head. Only, she thought of the old home and of strange children frolicking on the mounds, or pulling up the carefully-planted shells; only, she seemed to watch an aged, bent man ploughing with a gaunt mule in unfamiliar fields.

All the while, tears were streaming down her cheeks. "Oh, good Lawd!" she sobbed, "trip up his hoss's heels, lemme git thar, I'll 'fess religion, sho'!"

The thorn trees had torn her face and her arms, from which her sleeves hung in ribbons, and she was sore in every muscle; not a whit did she abate her speed for these, forcing her bruised feet over the rough ground. She knew the road which her father was likely to take. He would go to Powhatan to Col. Searcy and then to the Harris place. The road ran obliquely backward from the town. There was a short cut across a bayou. A log had been felled to make a bridge, but it had fallen short. No matter, she would jump. When she came to the water, the gap between the log and the high bank beyond seemed a long one. She crawled

over on the log. At the end, she rose to her feet. Were she not so dizzy she could make the jump; but her legs were shaking so! She measured the distance with her eye. On the other side the yellow road wound in to the forest, with the tree shadows on it; and an old negro on a mule was leisurely riding toward her, while back of him, in hot haste, a white man was spurring his horse.

Jinny shut her teeth and her eyes and jumped.

She felt the hard clay on the further bank grind against her knees, and scrambled up by the roots of a tree.

"Oh, Lawd," she vowed, "on'y lemme ketch 'im, I'll give up *dancin'*, I will!"

It was her supreme sacrifice. With fresh strength she ran through the trees. For a moment she was obliged to lose sight of the two men; when she came out into the open her father was riding along alone, singing.

The words came to her:

"I'se gwine tuh lay down my heaby load, heaby load;
An' one er dese mahnin's bright an fair,
I'll h'ist my li'le wings an' try de air."

Jinny's haggard eyes sought her father's face. It only needed a glance to see. Then, something solemn and rapt in the old black man's expression stopped the bitter flood on her lips.

He lifted his arm slowly, and pointed to Bracelin's fast-disappearing figure.

"Dar go Mars Rob's onlies' son, an' I done guv him 'is lastis chance. I dat is jis a po' wored-out ole nigger. De Lawd A'mighty bress de boy an' de chance! Hush, Jinny, honey, de Lawd done putt it enter my hairt, an' de Lawd kin look out fuh hit."

Jinny was dumb; so crushed, defeated and hopeless that she could only lean against the mule's flank and sob.

They were still standing, in this way, when Crom appeared. He had made sure of catching Bracelin at

the fork of the highway and thus had missed him, since he had gone through the wood.

Crom took in the meaning of the group at once. Without a word he wheeled his horse; but Noe caught his bridle-rein, saying: "Naw, boy, I knows whut wukin' in your min'. Quit dat. I tells ye, heah, ef ye do my ole marster's son a meanness I nebber gib my consent ye marry my da'ter. Min' dat, boy."

"I yent fixin' tuh do 'im a meanness," answered Crom sullenly; then he touched Jinny's shoulder and added: "Don't you take on, Jinny. I kin make out someway."

But his heart belied his confident words; he knew that no hundred-and-fifty dollars were available out of his own savings, and where else—? Suddenly a gleam of hope appeared to him. "Do ye mind if we-all go talk it over with the boss, Unk' Noe?" he said, meekly.

Whence, in a short time, it happened that a dismal procession stole into Col. Searcy's office.

The Colonel smiled up cordially from an awe-inspiring pile of manuscript and a big ledger.

"Well, Uncle Noe, back again?"

Noe waved Crom's intended speech aside. He spoke with a homely dignity: "Fustis, I got my say tuh say. I say I done guv dat money free an' willin'. Dat boy welcome tuh my money an' any." *

"How ye reckon tuh pay Mist' Harris then, hay?" said Crom in an aggrieved tone.

"I reckon *this* will satisfy Harris," said the Colonel. With a twinkle in his eye he was pushing a pile of bank-notes at Noe's wrinkled and gnarled black hand.

"Dey's de berry bills!" exclaimed Noe.

"That's likely," said the Colonel, dryly. "Look a here, you folks. Bracelin came here half-an-hour ago. He hasn't been here for five years, not since I gave him a talking about the way he was going on. As his father's friend and partner I tried to stop the boy, and he didn't take it in good part—but never mind

* A curious Arkansas expression equivalent to "all."

that. I always knew that he had the stuff in him if he would only brace up. Well, he came in here and pulled out those bills; said he was plum sure of those zinc mines and had put every last cent he could rake and scrape into them; and being in desperate need of two hundred dollars more he borrowed your money. Then he slapped those bills down on the table, and says he: 'Noe gave them to me as willing as possible because I'm my father's son. But I've been thinking. I'm *sure* of the mine; but the surest things go wrong; how the devil am I to pay Noe? I cayn't monkey a poor old nigger out of his money, so here it is back——'"

Jinny uttered a sob of joy; but Noe pushed the bills away.

"I doan feel right fuh tuh take it, sah. He needed it desprit, he said, desprit."

"Well, Uncle, he doesn't need it now," said the Colonel. "I have been looking into those mines for a good while, and I advanced him the money. I am so sure of those mines, Crom, that if Noe wants to buy twenty-five dollars' worth of stock, I'll guarantee him the money back."

But it was no prospect of gain which influenced old Noe. His fingers trembled with eagerness as he stretched the bills out to the colonel. "Take whut ye like, sah. He's his paw's own son, sah. Got *jis* his ways. I done pray de Lawd bress dat money fuh Mist' Bob. We-all cayn't keep up wid de Lawd; He got his own way. Whar's he at, sah?"

The colonel laughed: "I expect you mean Bob. He's up to my house for dinner."

. . . . . .

It was a year-and-a-half later, in the autumn (the zinc mines, meantime, having justified the Colonel's confidence) that Noe Brutus' new barn was completed, and he gave "a festival," in honor of the event. Young Bracelin and Miss Mandy Searcy, whom it is understood he is to marry shortly, were among the guests.

They had dancing on the new barn floor; and the gayest and nimblest of the dancers was Jinny.

"Go long, nigger," she said jocosely to Cromwell, her husband, when he would have teased her by reminding her of a certain vow, "go long! Yent I tole ye I promised the Lawd I give up dancin', if He'd git me tuh pap afo' Mist' Bob. Wa'al, He didn't done it, that's all. Yent noner my business, papa's prarers bein' answered so slick. Let him quit dancin' ef he wants tuh; *he's* the one that had orter. Reckon the Lawd knowed I jes natchelly *cudn't*, so He ben mussiful—ya'as, Mist' Bracelin, ya'as'ah, the bres'pin you-all sent me suits me *fine!*"

And all this time old Noe has been sitting in his corner, by the widow Lamb, never taking his eyes off Bracelin. They are dim, the old eyes, with grateful tears. Only the widow Lamb hears him murmur:

"His paw's own son! An' doin' well. Bress de Lawd! Now, when we two meets up in heaven, I yent gwine be 'fraid tell' im 'bout his boy."

The brave young woman who hunted out and finally "laid" the ghost of which she writes so brightly for ROMANCE, signs herself Louise Burnham. She should be appointed a special inspector of haunted houses.

MY GHOST.

OUR new home was perfectly modern; there were no long-disused rooms, no mysterious passages or sealed doors; in fact, not even a garret. It was truly a very unlikely place in which to find a ghost; and yet we found one, and a most satisfactory, I had almost said lifelike, one; and, really, if "lifelike" means true to nature, why cannot a ghost be lifelike when it satisfies our preconceived idea of what a *bona fide* ghost should be? I take great credit to myself for making the discovery under such unfavorable circumstances. It requires no great ability to see and hear ancestral ghosts under the proper uncanny influences, but to find a perfectly new one in a modern three-story brick house in a city street is a stroke of genius.

I am not a timid person, and, being rather frail, the Spring that we moved to Merton, was given the one bedroom downstairs, which opens off the parlor. I was awakened during the first night that I slept there by hearing some one running down the stairs and into the parlor. Thinking it was my mother or sister, I called out, but received no answer. I jumped out of bed, and going into the adjoining room, found no one there. I was much astonished, but concluded that I had been dreaming. Feeling only a not unpleasant surprise at the vividness of the impression, I snuggled down to sleep again. In the little time of my lying awake, the stillness of the house and town was perfect. I am little given to dreaming, but my sleep is as light as that of a wild animal; there is no perceptible space between my being sweetly sound asleep and wide awake with all my faculties in perfect working order. It was with

no little surprise therefore that I was awakened a second time by the not-to-be mistaken sound of bare feet and light, fluttering drapery in hurried flight down the stairs, through the hall and into the middle of the parlor, where it stopped—stopped suddenly, absolutely, and the dead silence of the house re-asserted itself.

At the first sound, I had started up, thinking that something had frightened the motherkin. When it stopped, I thought she is listening; and as I cautiously slipped out of bed to go to her, I listened so intently that the silence seemed to roar with sound, although I knew there was no sound whatever. When I stepped into the parlor, I had not the slightest doubt that my mother would be standing there, in a frightened, listening attitude. The shock to my mind will be appreciated when it is stated that the moonlight streamed through the as yet uncurtained windows into a perfectly empty room, leaving no possibility for any one to be there and not be in sight. I could see into the hall and the black hole of the basement-stairs. How long I stood there gazing at emptiness I cannot say. The stupidity of utter amazement was upon me.

When I rallied, I took a light and explored the big closet opening off the parlor, the library and the basement. Yes, I did. Far be it from me to boast myself, but I proudly maintain that, with no other means of defense than a carefully regulated female scream in my throat ready to to off at the slightest excuse, I investigated the basement.

I said nothing of my experience when, in the morning, I was accused of looking a little pale and tired. During the day, however, I told the little mother, and before many hours, her quick wit had found a solution of the mystery. She remembered that the night before, the weekly washing not being dry, she had had the clothes hung on the back piazza running past my room and the parlor. These, no doubt, had fluttered in some sudden gust of wind, and had subsided again after that had passed. We had a little quiet fun, and considered the matter ended; but, dreading the teasing of the

family, I coaxed her not to tell. When, however, to my great surprise I had the same experience the next night and again the next, I concluded, to quote our family joker, that "enough is sufficient." It is the proof of a noble mind to be convinced by evidence. I now believed most firmly that those noises were made by a ghost, and a ghost all our own.

But mother was sceptical and resolved to try her luck. She is a very sound sleeper, and, low be it said, she does indulge in vocal performances during her slumber that would lift the hair of a flesh-and-blood human being, not acquainted with their nature and origin; and it did not prove anything against the phantom that she had two undisturbed nights. On the whole, it tended to show that the creature had preferences not so removed from the human as one might have expected, and rather raised it in my estimation. Mother was now more sure than before that the ghost was a creation of my fancy. I rather resented this idea, but had no desire to return to what I now considered a haunted chamber.

In a short time, my sister for some reason slept in the parlor bedroom. In the morning she greeted me with "I like your pleasant little ways,—so thoughtful, you know, and all that, to let your only sister go to her doom in that frightful room."

I asked, rather feebly, "Was anything wrong?"

She looked at me out of her big eyes with solemn and exaggerated reproof; and as she firmly broke her egg, succinctly remarked, "It's haunted, and you knew it."

I wilted. She had had an awful night. No sooner would she fall asleep than that fearful, barefooted woman, with her swift, rustling movements, would come down the stairs into the parlor and stop, oh, so suddenly! Ruth was determined that she would never try a second night in that room. No, she would "tie a pillow around her head and stand in the corner first." Nothing could induce her to pass another such night. I should have been more than human if I had not been glad to find myself so upheld.

By common consent the room fell into disuse. Even the sceptical members of the family could find no explanation for the sounds; and those of us who had heard them felt no desire to hear them again. Our impressions were too vivid to be reasoned away, although, of course we had nothing to say in defence of a ghost in this nineteenth century.

Some little time after this, a cousin came to spend a few days with us. It was convenient to give him the haunted room. As he is a person of the strongest possible nerves, we did not hesitate to send him to this room with no word about its ghostly visitant. But even Ruth's indignation was a trifle compared with Tom's. Twice he had been awakened from a sound sleep by what he was sure was one of us coming downstairs and running swiftly into the parlor. When for the third time he had gone into the next room to find it perfectly empty and not a sound in the house, he concluded to sit up the remainder of the night and start for home the next morning. Although we all tried to look surprised and innocent while he told his story, he could not be convinced that we did not know all about the spirit. So persistent and vigorous a ghost as that one was certainly not making her début.

Nothing could be found to solve the mystery. In this common-sense age, none of us wanted to confess that we believed in ghosts; and yet, what was it? There was not the slightest shadow of a crime or of a great misfortune in the history of the house to found a ghost-story on. We might have thought it was a spirit come to warn us of pending disaster, but nothing at all unusual occurred to us after all its appearances.

One afternoon my mother and I sat sewing in the parlor. My sister, the only other person in the house, was in the room above. Suddenly the sound of swift footsteps down the stairs roused us, but we could still hear Ruth's voice as she sang in the upper room. The sound stopped suddenly. Mother went to see who it could be, but found no one. A trifle puzzled, she settled back to her work. A second time, the steps and the

soft rustling of drapery! Surely my ghost, for by right of discovery she was specially mine, was growing very bold and making daylight visits. That was a ghost with all the modern improvements. At some sudden sound in Ruth's room, I looked up. The ceiling was positively shuddering. It took only a flash of time (if any one's clock marks time in that way, he will understand just how long) to see that the ceiling had at some time been repaired by pasting cloth over a great hole in the plaster and kalsomining over it. Certain combinations of open windows and doors drew a current of air between the floor and ceiling and moved this cloth in a very curious way, giving the sound of fluttering garments and bare feet that we had so long and vainly sought to explain. The rest of the phenomenon was to be attributed to certain peculiar acoustic properties of the house which we had already discovered. Sound was gathered up there and its direction changed in quite a puzzling manner.

The mystery was solved. Our lady spectre, with her swift bare feet and softly rustling skirts, could no longer haunt us. The modern ghost was explained most prosaically. It was now a very simple matter to have the ceilings repaired and to lay the spirit. And so ended my only intercourse with ghosts.

The following bit of Japanese folk-lore was translated for *Belgravia* from an ancient work, found on sale in the city of Yedo, and called "A Hundred Lessons in Virtue for Youthful Minds." It is doubtful whether American children would care for these queer Japanese conceits; but for older readers they are full of charm, not for any wealth of plot or imagery, but because they are the product of a civilization far older than that from which we have sprung, and because they throw a light upon the mental operations of the most interesting nation in the world.

THE FOX KETTLE.

On the beautiful shores of the Bay of Odawarra there lived many years ago a young couple. The man was out with the boats fishing for the greater part of the week, while his wife strove to make some little addition to their precarious income by the sale of fruits and sweetmeats to travellers. The fisherman was an honest, sober, hard-working fellow enough, but he had one great fault, and this was a rooted disrespect for the gods of the country; and no amount of persuasion on the part of his wife, or remonstrance on the part of his neighbors, or argument on the part of his priest, could convince him that the deities were anything else than —to translate exactly the Japanese expression—"arrant humbugs." "What good are they to us?" he would say to his wife; "I may kneel until my legs are sore; I may pray until my voice is hoarse, but for all that the gods don't send the fish into my nets, and I don't see that we get any the better off for all my devotions." His wife, who was a soft-speaking, gentle-minded woman, always reproached him for the contempt with which he treated the gods, and would answer: "Nay, Kikuchi, we have health and strength, and surely they are more worth than all the riches of the world."

They were sitting one evening over the charcoal brazier, the children were playing on the beach outside, and the kettle was boiling merrily. Suddenly the

charcoal shifted, the kettle overturned, scalded the woman's hand, and put out the fire Kikuchi, who had met with but poor sport during the day, and who was not in the best of humors, broke out into a towering passion, seized the kettle, and flung it out on to the beach. "Ever since I bought this horrid thing," he cried, "it has done nothing but give us trouble; so there it goes, and we'll get a new one," and he ran out and kicked the kettle angrily about until it disappeared in the waves. When he returned he found his wife in an agony of tears. "What is the matter, O Hana?" he asked. O Hana did not reply, but merely pointed to a dark corner of the room. Kikuchi looked, and saw a large fox staring at him with his red, sparkling eyes. Seizing a wooden wine-measure, he hurled it at the intruder, but the animal was too quick, and the missile crashed through the paper window into the street. "O Kikuchi! Kikuchi! what have you done?" cried O Hana. "You've driven Kitsuné away!" (Here it should be explained that the fox is held in universal reverence by the Japanese people. The god Inari, patron of rice, fish, and daily food, is especially fond of assuming the guise of a fox, and his appearance is looked upon, according to circumstances, as a good or evil omen.) "Well! what do I care?" retorted Kikuchi, gulping down a cup of wine. "What do I care for an ugly, red-eyed, prying fox? You believe he's a god, but I know better, and I only wish the thing had hit him."

But O Hana was very sorrowful for the rest of the evening, and retired to bed with her children earlier than usual. That night Kikuchi had a terrible dream. The kettle appeared in a flame of fire, and out of the spout was a huge fox-brush. It remained at the foot of his quilts all the night, and seemed to glare at him with its large red eyes. He could not get rid of the apparition, try as he might, and when morning dawned he was worn and irritable with the loss of his night's rest.

During the next day his eldest boy, a bouncing

youngster of seven, sickened. The doctor was called in. He examined the patient's eyelids and asked: "Have you been quarrelling lately?" Both husband and wife answered, "No." "Have you been drinking too much?" "No." "Have you been blaspheming?" Kikuchi with a blush answered, "No." "Has anything out of the way happened lately?" "Nothing in particular," said Kikuchi; "I was in a bit of a temper last evening with my old kettle, and kicked it away." "Kicked a kettle away!" said the doctor; "that is a bad thing to do, for Kitsuné is very fond of kettles. I thought that the child must have a devil, so if he takes a little Furidashi and these twelve pills every half-hour with hot water, he will get over it."

The anxious parents tried the Furidashi and the pills, but with no beneficial effect, for the poor little fellow grew worse and worse. The last remedy was tried—the swallowing of the holy picture worn round every child's neck, dissolved in hot water; but with no success, for he died. Still, Kikuchi was not convinced that he had done wrong, but continued to rail at the gods in general and Kitsuné in particular, in the wildest manner. The weird apparition still haunted him at nights, his fishing produced nothing, no travellers stopped to buy O Hana's fruit, and everything went to rack and ruin. Then O Hana resolved that she would go to the shrine of Inari on the hillside. So, when the morn rose behind the tall, black pine trees, she crept softly away, unobserved by her husband, and knelt at the shrine of the god. "O Kitsuné!" she said, with the tears streaming from her eyes, "I am in great distress. Help me!" A blaze of light appeared in the shrine, and in the midst of it she saw the great fox-god. He looked at her for a moment with kindling eyes, merely said, "Find the kettle," and disappeared. As she descended the rough path, she saw a red glare in the heavens. A terrible thought came across her mind, and, alas! when she arrived at the village, she beheld her house in flames, Kikuchi and her children standing outside with the few articles they had been able to

save, and in the midst of the flames was the fox crying out, "The kettle! The kettle!" Kind neighbors sheltered the homeless family for the night. O Hana told Kikuchi all she had seen, and was glad to find that he was an altered man. Early the next day they set forth to search for the kettle. Along the shore, through the village, on the high road, even to the great town they went, and at last in an old iron shop they found the kettle, much battered and bruised. Tenderly they wrapped it up and carried it back to the village; there they polished it, mended up the holes which had been made in its sides, and together they went to the shrine of Inari. The god appeared as he had appeared to O Hana, and in terrible tones he said: "Kikuchi, learn from this lesson never to mock at the gods; go, and sin no more."

And Kikuchi mended his ways, religiously kept the kettle clean and burnished, paid his devotions twice a day at the shrine of Inari, and was rewarded by continual happiness and prosperity.

ROMANCE.

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It is said that we are all the victims of our environment. M. Alphonse Daudet, in the following charming study, which has been translated for ROMANCE by M. F. H., gives a concrete illustration of this theory.

THE BOUGIVAL CLOCK.

An Incident of the Franco-Prussian War.

FROM BOUGIVAL TO MUNICH.

IT was a clock of the Second Empire—one of those clocks of Algerian onyx, ornamented with Campanian designs, that one buys on the Boulevard des Italiens. Its gold key hung by a red ribbon from a little projection on the top.

It was a sample of the most delicate, modern and peculiarly Parisian workmanship; a little toy clock, striking with a clear sweet tone; but it was without a grain of good sense, full of whims, marking the hours at random, passing the half-hours, hardly serving to show the time for business to its master, or the time for pleasure to its mistress.

When the war broke out, it was at Bougival, being well adapted for the summer palaces of that airy town —pretty paper cages, with light furniture, and lace and muslin draperies floating over silk.

On the arrival of the Bavarians, this clock was among the first seizures; and one must admit that these people from across the Rhine are very skilful packers. This plaything of a clock, hardly larger than a turtle-dove's egg, made the journey from Bougival to Munich in the midst of Krupp's cannón and of army wagons loaded with shot; and yet it arrived without a crack, and appeared the very next day in the window of August Cahn, dealer in curiosities. It looked as fresh and coquettish as ever, its delicate hands curved like dark eye-lashes, and its little key hanging from a new ribbon.

THE ILLUSTRIOUS DOCTOR-PROFESSOR OTTO DE SCHWANTHALER.

Its appearance was an event in Munich. No one had as yet seen a Bougival clock, and every one went to look at it with as much curiosity as at the Japanese shells in the Siebold Museum. Three rows of big pipes were puffing from morning till night before the shop of August Cahn, and the people of Munich, with round eyes and exclamations of stupefaction, asked themselves of what use such a singular little machine could be. The illustrated journals gave pictures of it and photographs hung in all the shop windows. In its honor the illustrious doctor-professor Otto de Schwanthaler composed his famous "Paradoxe sur les Pendules," a humorous-philosophical study in six hundred pages, wherein is treated the influence of clocks on the life of nations. In this he logically proved that a country foolish enough to regulate the use of time by such wayward chronometers as this little Bougival clock ought to expect every catastrophe, as much as a ship which went to sea with a false compass.

As the Germans do everything thoroughly, the illustrious doctor-professor before writing his "Paradoxe" wished to have the clock at hand, where he could study it carefully and analyze it minutely like an entomologist; so he bought it, and thus it happened that the clock passed from August Cahn's shop to the drawing-room of the illustrious doctor-professor Otto de Schwanthaler, *conservator* of the Pinacothek, member of the Academy of Arts and Sciences.

THE SCHWANTHALER DRAWING-ROOM.

That which first struck one upon entering the Schwanthaler drawing-room, academic and solemn as a conference-hall, was a large marble clock, with a bronze figure of Polyhymnia upon it and very complicated wheel-work inside. The main dial was surrounded by

smaller dials on which were marked the hours, the minutes, the seasons, the equinoxes, and even the changes of the moon, set in bluish clouds in the centre of the pedestal. The sound of this powerful machine filled the house. From the foot of the stairs one could hear the heavy pendulum moving with a slow steady swing, which seemed to measure life into small morsels; besides this sonorous tic-tac, one could hear the vibrations of the second-hand moving with the feverish effort of a spider who knows the worth of time.

Then the hour sounded, slowly and gravely as in a college time-piece, and whenever the hour sounded, something took place in the Schwanthaler home. Either M. de Schwanthaler, laden with papers started for the Pinacothek; or the dignified Madame de Schwanthaler returned from a lecture with her three daughters, three tall girls who reminded one of hop-poles; or else there were lessons, music, dancing or gymnastics; pianos were opened, embroideries taken up, music-desks rolled into the middle of the room—and all in such a methodical way that to hear the Schwanthaler family put itself in motion at the first stroke of the clock, entering and leaving in two lines, made one think of the procession of apostles in the Strasbourg clock. One instinctively waited for the last stroke to see the family disappear within their time-piece.

SINGULAR INFLUENCE OF THE BOUGIVAL CLOCK UPON AN HONEST FAMILY OF MUNICH.

The Bougival clock had been placed alongside of the monumental time-piece. Now notice the effect of its apparently insignificant presence.

One evening the ladies were busy with embroidery in the large drawing-room, and the illustrious doctor-professor was reading the first pages of his "Paradoxe" to a few colleagues of the Academy of Arts and Sciences, interrupting himself from time to time to take the little clock into his hands for illustration. Suddenly Eva de Schwanthaler, seized by I know not what

malign curiosity, said to her father with a blush, "Oh papa, make it strike."

The doctor untied the key, turned it twice, and one heard a tone so clear, so full of life, that a thrill of joy ran through the grave assembly. Every eye sparkled.

"How pretty, how pretty!" cried the girls, with a slight air of animation and a fluttering of the hair, new to them.

Then M. de Schwanthaler exclaimed triumphantly:

"Just notice that foolish French clock; it strikes eight, and marks three!"

This caused a general laugh, and in spite of the late hour, these gentlemen launched into a philosophical discussion with interminable references to French frivolity. No one thought of leaving. They did not even hear from Polyhymnia's dial the warning stroke of ten, which usually scattered every one. The big clock could not understand it. Never before had it seen so much gayety in the Schwanthaler mansion, never company so late in the drawing-room. The worst of it was that, when the young ladies had gone to their rooms, they felt faint and hungry from the prolonged merriment, and the sentimental Minna herself said, stretching her arms, "Oh, how good a lobster's claw would taste!"

GAYETY, MY CHILDREN, GAYETY!

Once set in motion, the Bougival clock resumed its ill-regulated life and dissipated habits. People began by laughing at its caprices; yet, little by little, influenced by its sweet tone, sounding at random, the serious life of the Schwanthalers lost all regard for time, and they passed the days with an easy indifference. There was a general overturning of things; no more lectures, no more lessons, but a constant desire for change and excitement. Mendelssohn and Schumann grew monotonous, and were replaced by "La Grande Duchesse" or "Le Petit Faust," and these young girls

danced and sung, while the illustrious doctor-professor himself, seized with a kind of giddiness, kept urging them on, saying, "More gayety, my children, more gayety!" As to the large clock, no one thought any more of it. The girls had stopped the pendulum, pretending that it kept them awake at night, and all the household followed the whims of the capricious little French time-piece.

At this moment appeared the famous "Paradoxe des Pendules."

The Schwanthalers gave a large reception to celebrate the event, not like their former academic evenings with subdued lights and quiet tones, but a grand fancy ball, at which Madame Schwanthaler and her daughters appeared as Bougival canoeists, with bare arms, short skirts, and low hats covered with ribbons. This event was town talk, but it was only a beginning; comedy, tableaux, suppers, baccarat, followed. Such was the life led in the Schwanthaler drawing-room that winter, before the eyes of scandalized Munich.

"Gayety, my children, gayety!" repeated the academician, more and more beside himself; and indeed every one was gay. Madame Schwanthaler, elated by her success as a canoeist, spent her time on the Isar, dressed in extravagant costumes.

The young girls, left alone at home, took French lessons from the captive officers of the Hussars, while the little clock, which had every reason to think itself at Bougival, played recklessly with the hours, always striking eight when it marked three. At last, one morning, a whirlwind of gayety carried the Schwanthalers to America, and the most beautiful Titians of the Pinacothek followed its most illustrious member!

Here is the story of a war episode in which a forester's daughter plays the part of a heroine. It is by Guy de Maupassant, and is translated for ROMANCE by Mrs. Rumsey Wing.

BERTHINE'S PRISONERS.

NOT a sound in the forest, except the snow falling lightly from the trees. It had been falling all day, a fine white powder, which covered the branches like moss, and coated the dead leaves with glistening silver. Across the roads an immense carpet, soft and white, was spread under the trees, increasing the deadly silence. Before the door of a forester's hut, a young woman, with bare arms, was splitting wood on a stone with a hatchet. She was tall, thin, and strong, this wife and daughter of the forest.

Suddenly a voice from within the house was heard:

"Remember, Berthine, night is coming and we are alone, with Prussians and wolves roaming about us."

The wood-cutter raised her arms, and with heavy, rude blows, finished her work before replying, "I am coming, mother. Don't be afraid; it is still daylight."

She carried in her load of logs and kindling-wood and piled them in the chimney-corner. Then she went outside to close the immense shutters, built of strong oak. Finally she came in and closed the door, drawing the heavy bolts. Her mother was spinning near the fire, an old woman, wrinkled and weak, whom age had made timid.

"I don't like to be here, when the father is away. Two women are not worth much."

The young woman answered her, "Oh! I would as soon kill a Prussian as a wolf. It is quite the same," and she glanced meditatively at a huge revolver hanging on the wall.

Her husband had been forced into the army at the beginning of the Prussian invasion, and the two women

had been left alone with the old forester, Nicholas Pinchon, who had stubbornly refused to leave his home and seek the protection of the neighboring village.

Berthel, this little village, had been an ancient fortress, built upon a rock. They were patriotic there, and the merchants had resolved to resist the invader, to shut themselves in and sustain the siege. According to traditions, on two occasions already, once under Henry IV. and again under Louis XIV., the people of Berthel had distinguished themselves by making an heroic defense. They were ready to do it again, or be burned within their walls!

So they had purchased guns and cannon, equipped the militia, formed a battalion and companies, and every day they drilled at the Place d'Armes. All of them drilled—the baker, the grocer, the butcher, the lawyer, the notary, the druggists. The entire male population answered the roll-call at regular hours, under the command of Monsieur Lavigne, formerly sergeant of dragoons, now a grocer, having married the daughter and inherited the shop of the elder Monsieur Ravandan.

He had assumed the rank of major, and, the younger men having gone off with the army, he made a regiment of all who were left behind. The fat men were all seen going to the gymnasium, to reduce their flesh and prolong their breath; the weak men carried heavy loads, to increase their muscle.

They waited in vain, however, for the Prussians, who would not come. Still, they were not far off, for twice of late their scouts had pushed across the forest, near the lodge of Nicholas Pinchon l'Echasse, whose house served as advance-post in the forest of Auline. They pointed their cannon and awaited their enemies, but they did not appear.

Twice a week Nicholas Pinchon went into the village for provisions and to carry the news of the forest to the merchant citizens. On the day mentioned he had started early, to announce that a small detachment of German infantry had encamped near him the night

before, about three hours after dinner, and had finally departed, the officer in command speaking French. The old forester, who could still run like a fox, had come to warn them. He had with him two large blood-hounds with jaws like lions, for he feared the wolves, already beginning to be ferocious.

His wife and daughter were left alone, with orders to barricade the door as night approached. The young woman feared nothing, but the old mother kept repeating, in her nervous dread, "This day will end in trouble for us. When will the father return?"

The daughter replied, "Oh, very late, for he will dine with the commandant, who always keeps him late."

She proceeded to take down the saucepan from its hook near the fire, and began to prepare supper, when she paused suddenly, a sound having reached her ears through the chimney.

She murmured, "Some one is passing through the forest—at least six or eight men marching."

The terrified mother stopped her spinning and cried, "Mon Dieu! and the father absent!"

She had scarce finished speaking when several violent blows made the stout door tremble. As there was no response from the women, a deep guttural voice called to them "Open"—and after a moment of silence, again, "Open or I shall break the door!"

Berthine slipped the big revolver into the folds of her dress, and pressed her ear to the door, demanding, "Who are you?"

A voice replied, "The detachment of yesterday."

"What do you wish?"

"We have been lost in the forest since yesterday. Now open the door, or I will surely beat it down."

Berthine had no choice. She slipped back the heavy bolts and the strong, antique locks.

She saw, in the pale, snowy light, six men, six terrible Prussians, the same who had passed the day before.

Taking a resolute tone, she asked, "What do you wish at this late hour?"

"We are lost and have eaten nothing since yesterday morning. I remembered this house."

Berthine told them she was alone with her mother. The officer, who appeared to be an honest man, answered, "Never mind that. We will not harm you, but we must be fed. We are dying of fatigue and hunger."

She stood aside and bade them enter. They crowded in, covered with snow, carrying on their caps a sort of *créme meringue* mass of snow. They were evidently exhausted, and as they seated themselves contentedly around the table on the benches, she said, "You certainly look worn out."

After closing the door with the heavy bars, she returned to her saucepan, to which she added a double quantity of bacon, potatoes, and butter, all of which she mixed together to make a bouillon. The six men followed her movements with eyes in which hunger could not be concealed. They had placed their guns and caps in a corner, and waited for their supper like good children, seated on school benches.

The mother had resumed her spinning, casting now and then furtive, timid glances toward the intruders. Not a sound was heard except the turning of the wheel, the crackling of the fire, and the boiling of the water. But suddenly a strange noise made them all shudder. It was a sound like the hoarse breathing of a strong and heavy beast. The officer made a dash for his gun, but Berthine smiled reassuringly.

"It is only the wolves. They are abroad and hungry, very much as you yourselves were a few minutes ago."

The incredulous German wished to see for himself, and the window was opened. In the dim light two immense beasts were plainly visible, who fled toward the forests, with long strides, upon hearing the noise made by the opening shutters. The officer murmured to himself, "I would not have believed it," and resumed his place, to await the supper, which was speedily ready, and was ravenously devoured.

The two women silently watched the movements of

the red beards as the potatoes rapidly disappeared within. The men were thirsty, and the good Berthine proposed to bring them cider from the cellar. She was gone a long time.

This cellar was arched, and during the wars had been used as a prison—"a cachetto." It was reached by means of a spiral ladder, and was closed by a trap-door in the kitchen-floor.

When Berthine reappeared, she was smiling serenely and scornfully. She handed the drinks to the soldiers, and went to the other end of the room, with supper for herself and her mother. The soldiers had finished and were nodding around the table. Now and then a forehead would fall with a bump on the table, awakening the other men.

Berthine said to them, "Lie down before the fire. There is room for all. My mother and I will climb to the room above."

The two women mounted the stair to the floor above them, and after closing and locking the door securely, they walked about for a few moments, and then all was quiet.

The Prussians stretched themselves on the floor with their feet to the fire, their heads supported on their capes, rolled up for pillows, and soon all six of them were snoring, each on a different key. The sounds were prolonged, deep, and formidable.

They had slept long when a shot was heard, breaking the stillness of the night. It sounded so near that it seemed to have been fired against the house. Several more shots were fired, and the door was thrown open. Then Berthine appeared, in bare feet, her candle flaring in her hand. She was in her night-dress, and her face showed her agitation.

"The French are coming—two hundred of them!" she cried. "If they find you here, they will burn the house! Go into the cellar, and don't make a noise, or we are lost!"

The alarmed officer asked, "How are we to get there?"

Berthine opened the trap-door, and the six Germans tumbled, one after the other, down the ladder.

When the point of the last helmet had disappeared, Berthine closed the heavy door, which was as hard as steel and as thick as a wall. It was held by hinges, and was fastened with a prison-lock. She turned the key three times, and then began to laugh, silently but with ecstacy, and evinced an insane desire to dance over the heads of her victims.

There was not a sound from the Prussians, shut in a stone box, breathing through an air-hole, secured by iron bars. The enchanted Berthine again lighted her fire, hung her saucepan over the blaze and warmed the soup; saying to herself, "The father will be hungry and tired to-night."

Then she seated herself and waited alone, with the clock for company, glancing at the hour-hand which made her impatient, it moved so slowly.

Presently there was a murmur under her feet. Low, confused words reached her from the arched cellar. The Prussians were beginning to suspect her *ruse*, and finally the lieutenant mounted the ladder and struck the door a resounding blow, saying, "Open this door."

She approached and mimicking his accent, asked, "What do you wish?"

"I will break the door."

"Break it, my good man, try your best, my good man."

It would have resisted the assault of a catapult. The forest-girl heard him go down and the soldiers came up the ladder one by one to examine the lock, but decided that it would be useless to attempt to break it. Then they returned and talked the matter over among themselves.

The young woman listened but, hearing nothing, went outside to await her father.

A distant barking reached her ears. She whistled like a huntsman, and two enormous dogs sprang out of the shadows and played at her feet. She seized them

by the collar to prevent them from running away, and called aloud, "Ohé, papa!"

A voice from the forest answered, "Ohé, Berthine!"

She waited a little while and again called out, "Ohé, papa!"—and the response came again, "Ohé, Berthine."

Then she called to him in a voice of warning, "Don't pass too near the air-hole! There are Prussians in the cellar." Presently the tall figure of the forester was visible on the left, standing out plainly against the trunks of the trees.

He asked with anxiety, "Prussians in the cellar? What do you mean?"

The young woman laughed joyously.

"They are the same who passed yesterday. They were lost in the forest, and I have put them in the cellar to cool."

She proceeded to relate the story of the capture—how she had frightened them by the shots from the revolver, and had induced them to hide in the cellar, which was now their prison.

The old father, still uneasy, asked—"And what do you expect me to do at this hour?"

"Go and bring Monsieur Lavigne and his soldiers. He will be so delighted!"

The father smiled.

"Yes, he will be pleased enough."

Berthine brought his supper, and bade him eat and then depart to the village. The old guard seated himself and began his supper, first filling two bowls for the dogs. The Prussians, hearing voices, remained silent. In a quarter of an hour, the old man had gone, and Berthine sat down again to await him.

The Prussians were becoming restless. They called, they shouted, and beat the door with terrific blows with the ends of their muskets. Then they began firing—shot after shot through the air-hole, hoping to attract some passing squad or scouts.

Berthine did not move, but the noise annoyed and irritated her. A tempest of rage awakened in her; she would like to have murdered them, the rascals!—if

only to make them keep silent. As her impatience increased, she began watching the clock, to count the minutes. Her father had been gone an hour and a half. He had reached the village. She fancied that she could see him as he told the story to Monsieur Lavigne, who grew pale with emotion and hastily summoned the maid to bring his uniform and arms. She seemed to hear the drummer running through the streets. She saw the alarmed faces appear at the windows, and then the soldier-citizens hurrying forth, half-clad, from their homes, breathless, buckling their belts, and keeping their military step, while they hastened to the house of the commandant. Then the troop, with the old guard Pinchon at the head, marched forth in the night, amid the snow, into the forest. Berthine still watched the clock.

"They will be here in an hour."

A nervous impatience was overwhelming her. The minutes appeared interminable. "How terribly long they were!"

At last the time which she had fixed for them to appear with her father had arrived. She opened the door and listened. A shadow marched cautiously toward her. She gave a cry of joy. It was her father.

"They have sent me to see if there is any change."

"No, father."

He disappeared again into the darkness of the forest and gave a shrill whistle, which echoed back and forth among the great branches. Something brown came from under the trees, slowly. It was the advance-guard composed of ten men. The forester warned them to beware of the air-hole. Each squad in turn warned those who followed, until the entire troop of two hundred men, appeared, carrying two hundred guns. Monsieur Lavigne, agitated and trembling, disposed of his men in a fashion to entirely surround the house, leaving a large space in front of the most formidable air-hole, on a level with the ground. Then he went inside the house to discover the strength and attitude of the enemy, who had suddenly become so silent that one

might believe they had vanished through the air-hole.

Monsieur Lavigne stamped upon the trap-door and called out, "Monsieur l'officier Prussien!"

The German did not reply.

The commandant repeated, "Monsieur l'officier Prussien"—but he called in vain.

For twenty minutes he summoned these silent men to give themselves up, with their arms, promising them their lives and all military honors for the officer and his men. But he received no sign either of consent or of hostility. The situation was becoming difficult. The citizen-soldiers were marching over the snowy ground, back and forth, beating their arms across their shoulders like coachmen, in order to keep warm. They watched the air-hole, with an increasing and inexplicable desire to pass near it. One or two did pass perilously near it. One very agile fellow made a leap and sprang past the dangerous spot.

There was no result. The prisoners acted like dead men. They made absolutely no movement. A voice cried out, "There is no one there." Then another soldier ventured to pass the hole, and then another, until it became a sort of play for them. They made the snow fly from their heels as they ran, shaking their feet. They had built a great fire out of the dead wood from the forest, and when running, they were in the full rays of the light. Some one called to the fat baker, whose figure was the ridicule of the village, "Now you try it, Malvison."

He hesitated, and they tormented him until he, too, set out to make the dash past the air-hole of the cellar, with a regular gymnastic step, his large body shaking. The whole detachment laughed, until tears came, and all cried, "Bravo, bravo." He had finished two-thirds of his journey, when a long flame shot out of the air-hole, red and blinding. There was a deafening sound, and the enormous baker fell with a howl, flat on his nose. No one ran to his assistance, and he managed to

drag himself in the snow, groaning, until he escaped the danger line, when he fainted. A ball had entered the calf of his leg.

After the first shock and surprise they all laughed again; but the commandant approached from the door of the forester's hut, to order a new plan of attack. He shouted in a shrill voice for the plumber and his workmen.

Three men approached.

"Take down the gutter-pipe from the house."

In a quarter of an hour they had taken down twenty metres of pipe from the house, and had inserted it, with many precautions against surprise, into a narrow opening of the air-hole, then they conducted the water from the hydrant through the pipe, and Monsieur Lavigne announced that he was going to offer the Prussians a drink of water.

A wild cry of admiration greeted the commandant, followed by peals of laughter. The Frenchmen pumped in the water, turn by turn. The iron wheel was set in motion, and presently there was a sound of water flowing and falling in cascades into the cellar. Several hours passed, the commandant marching up and down, growing very impatient, pressing his ear to the trap-door to discover what the prisoners were doing down below, and asking from time to time if they were ready to surrender.

At last there was a murmur from the enemy, followed by a shaking of the barricade, and toward eight o'clock a voice was heard coming through the aperture, an unmistakably German voice speaking with a strong German accent.

"I would like to say something to the commanding officer."

Lavigne answered from the window, without going too near, "Do you surrender?"

"I surrender."

"Then pass the guns outside."

One gun was passed through the hole, then another,

each falling in the snow, until all six were delivered. Then the same voice said, "I have no more. Hurry! We are drowning."

The commandant ordered the pumps to be stopped, and filling the kitchen with soldiers, armed from head to foot, he slowly and carefully raised the trap-door. Four damp heads appeared, four blond, dripping heads, and four pale faces; then two more, until the six shivering Germans stood before them, with wet uniforms, chattering teeth, and subdued mien.

They were seized and handcuffed, and fearing a surprise, they set out, marching double-quick in two squads, one in charge of the prisoners and the other carrying the wounded baker on a mattress.

They entered the village of Berthel, triumphant. Monsieur Lavigne was decorated for having captured an advance-guard of the Prussians; the fat baker was presented with a medal for wounds received before the enemy; and Berthine, the forester's daughter, received —nothing!

The story-writers would have us believe, in common with some of our philosophers, that heroism is the child of no nation nor condition. The poor Indian Amah, in the following striking original story by Leon Mead, certainly rivals any of our Anglo-Saxon heroines in the grandeur of her achievement.

MRS. GORDON'S AMAH.

A Story of the Chinese Riots.

I.

THE great bell of the Honam temple was tolling the hour for service. This bell, twice the size of a man, of ponderous tone and exasperating harshness, was being most energetically pounded by a shaven and cowlless priest; yet a woman standing under its shadow seemed, in spite of its deafening roar, to be unconscious of this metallic thunder, so absorbed was she in thought. She was a slender woman, her deep coloring showing her to be of the Sampau class, but the fineness of her coat, the white sheerness of her long, flowing undersleeve, the beauty of the chasing on a gold ring she wore, and the ring of a gold watch peeping out from her breast-pocket proved her either the wife of a foreigner, or a favored servant in a European family.

She was leaning eagerly forward, watching the carven door from which the procession of priests was to enter, and pressing in her small, olive-nailed fingers two "chopped" silver dollars, greatly to the interest of the bell-ringer. The temple was crowded, for it was a fête-day, and the woman and the bell-ringer were thrown nearer and nearer together, when at last, at a given signal, the priest's door was opened, the rank and file of yellow-gowned acolytes entered, and the bell ceased its clamor with a hoarse and resonant groan. The young woman pressed yet more eagerly forward toward the altar.

Last in the row of acolytes came a youth whose shaven head, and long yellow robe, proclaimed him a Buddhist neophyte. After salaming ten times, with forehead to the floor, before the great idol of Buddha, he withdrew with his companions to the side of the altar, and then gazed with apparent carelessness over the audience. His challenging gaze met that of the young woman, who at once began a slow and toilsome pilgrimage through the crowd toward him. He, in turn, as the service progressed, dropped away from his companions a little, and at last the two met at the base of a huge pillar, which partially concealed them from the mass of the people.

"See, Ah Ye," she said, "I have brought you the silver. Is there news of the *fanqui* uprising? Tell me!"

The young neophyte cast his eyes heavenward, and placing the palm of one hand over the back of the other, stretched them in front of him with a gesture peculiarly Chinese, but made no answer.

"If you can tell me nothing, I will keep my silver," said the woman, as she drew a small purse from her breast and dropped therein her two dollars. The neophyte watched their disappearance and shrugged his shoulders, Chinese fashion.

"They would kill me if they knew," he said, glancing toward the priests, "but look there!" He thrust his sister forward, so that through the temple's portico she saw the sky gleaming with a lurid, red light. "That is the fire on Shameen," he said grimly. "They begin with the French Concession."

"And the English Concession—and Keecheong hong—must that go, too?"

"All—all! Even the servants of the fanqui [foreign devils] who remain with their masters will perish. There is only one English gunboat of the fool-foreigner in port, and the Viceroy, noble son of heaven, has placed obstructions in the stream, so that is only a little one. They will crush the foreign devil so!" he stepped on a beetle which had run out from the stones. His sister looked on, unmoved.

"Go home, Emui; go back to Canton," he added, as the girl placed her dollars in his palm and was hastening away. "It is a bad night for amahs on Shameen."

Emui made no answer. She looked at him an instant, then caught his hand under the folds of his long robe, and pressed it. After all, he was her brother.

He drew his shoulders forward, and again made the characteristic gesture with the lowered palms. "It is all one to me," he said, "fanqui or no fanqui. I am a priest of Buddha."

But the girl had fled.

Emui tore down the long stone-paved walk, which runs from the temple portico to the river's edge. There was no one in sight, but an empty sampau was anchored to the stones. Whose, she knew not. But she did not pause. She glanced around a second to see if a possible owner was in sight, to dispute her action, then kicked off her shoes, stepped lightly in, deftly untied the sampau, and lifted the huge yulow, or sampau oar. Luckily she had grown up in one of these boats, and propelling a sampau was second nature to her. Without a backward glance, she steered the stolen craft straight for the crimson-lighted bend of the Shameen.

II.

Mrs. Gordon was dressing for a dinner to be given that evening at the English Consulate. That is, she was attempting to dress, in a kind of helplessness that life in the Orient develops, greatly annoyed at the absence of her amah and ringing from time to time for the szetsai (boy) to learn if the maid had not come in, and at last giving orders to send a coolie for her. The long windows of the dressing-room were only slightly veiled in lace and thin silks, in order that any wavering breeze which might chance to enter should meet no impediments, but the punkah, pulled by a coolie outside the door, created an artificial breeze in the room, causing the delicate trifles on her dressing-

case to flutter, and even raising slightly the petals of the roses whose long stems were drying on a silver tray; roses to be worn at her breast, at the brilliant dinner of the English Consul that night. The room was a softened blaze of many candles, and the delicate fairness of Mrs. Gordon's arms and neck was reflected in many mirrors. But a deep frown was on her brow, as drawing off the pale pink stockings she had worn with her tea gown, Mrs. Gordon proceeded to turn wrong side out, and pull laboriously on, the creamy silk netting that would cling so exasperatingly, in spite of frequent dabs of violet powder. The night was warm, Mrs. Gordon was getting heated, a thing she greatly disliked before dinner, and her amah was unconscionably late. She glanced again at the tiny French clock, and then, her feet being shod, she stood irresolutely before a dainty mass of silk and lace on the bed, and asked herself if she should attempt to put it on alone. It was too provoking! If Jack were only here! But her husband had gone to Hong Kong; she was at her amah's mercy.

However, it was obviously impossible to lace oneself into a dinner-gown that fastened down the back. Mrs. Gordon sank despondently on an India mat, and fanned herself wearily. Then she drenched arms and neck in cool violet-water, still pondering. Never before had her amah annoyed her so. Then she rang again impatiently. In her own agitation she failed to notice the startled whiteness of her szetsai's face, as she ordered him to send still another coolie for the recreant maid, and that almost simultaneously with his respectful departure the breeze from her punkah died suddenly down. At last she noticed the warm stillness that followed the punkah's cessation, and she called in great surprise to the punkah-coolie, "Tim Kai ni, Kuntim, Faiti! Che fang sheen."

No answer coming, she rang again for the szetsai. Was the world coming to an end? The punkah-coolie stopping without orders on such a hot night—and her amah playing truant when she knew her mistress to be

dining out! What could it mean? As she waited for the szetsai's response to her ringing, a light step sounded and her amah entered, not quietly and gently, with her usual Oriental deliberateness, but with a hasty step and excited air that added to Mrs. Gordon's astonishment. The amah rushed to where her mistress was standing before the dressing-case, and dropped on her knees before her.

"Oh, Mississee," she said, embracing her mistress's feet, "China man very angry. Burn all Shameen to-night. Burn Mississee's hong, Keecheong hong to-night—perhaps this hour. Mississee must go—run—fly English gunboat. See! Mississee wear amah clothes. Oh, Mississee, dear Mississee, go quick. This house all gunpowder behind. Chinaman light very quick, Mississee die—burn. Mississee *must* go."

The amah was already attempting to place her own sandals over the cream silk stockings that Mrs. Gordon had donned with such trouble.

"What do you mean, amah?" asked her mistress, all impatience gone, and an absolute calmness growing within her, in the face of a real danger. "Do you mean there is a riot? Do you fancy the Chinese will burn Shameen? Nonsense. They dare not."

"Mississee," said the amah, wringing her hands, "look there."

She pulled Mrs. Gordon to the great balcony, through whose arches, hung with baskets of tropical flowers, and lighted with dense globular lamps, shone the same crimson gleam of light.

"Mississee, look! Already Chinaman burn French Consulate. Very soon Keecheong hong burn all samee. Mississee must go. Master gone Hong Kong. All coolie, all szetsai"—very contemptuously—"run away. Only amah here just now. Dear Mississee, go!" The amah was kneeling and wringing her little, olive-hued hands.

Mrs. Gordon looked at her Chinese maid. She was entirely self-controlled now. The Oriental, calm, not to say phlegmatic, in ordinary times, was intensely ex-

cited. Mrs. Gordon the American, vivacious and excitable usually, was quiet almost to impassiveness. Therein is one of the character-differences between the sophisticated Occidental, and the artless child of the Orient.

"Amah," said Mrs. Gordon as she submitted to the change of apparel, "what will you do when I am gone—gone, and in your clothing? Will they not hurt you?"

"I am Chinawoman," said the amah simply, relieved at her mistress's submission. "Chinaman no hurt Chinawoman."

No tremor betrayed her loyalty. Well Emui knew the fate of a Chinese traitress—who had ventured to assist a hated foreigner—a woman who had dared betray her countrymen. But she uttered no word of enlightenment to the mistress she loved.

"Emui," said the mistress as the maid buttoned her own coat under the fair, white chin, "how *can* they burn Keecheong hong?" [the Chinese name for the Gordon residence from time immemorial]. "Keecheong for so many years—one hundred years—been good to Chinaman."

The amah shrugged her shoulders. "Some Chinaman very bad," she said simply. She was now hastily, but deftly, arranging her mistress's hair, tea pot-fashion, in the Chinese coiffure. Whatever else might be lacking, a failure to wear her hair according to the Chinese mode would invite instant detection. Hence it would have been impossible for Mrs. Gordon to make her escape without a Chinese woman's aid. The peculiar and undeviating arrangement of their women's hair is the most inexorable of Chinese sumptuary laws. Fortunately Mrs. Gordon was a brunette. With each hair smoothly drawn back, and laid in place, and the whole mass securely coiled and interlooped about Emui's cherished jade hair-guard (it had been the amah's great-grandmother's), Mrs. Gordon's coiffure defied criticism. When her rapid toilette was made, even to the great swinging filagree and jade earrings without which no respectable Chinese woman is seen, the

mistress bent and kissed her Chinese servant on the cheek.

"Dear Emui!" she said, "when all this trouble is over, and I get safely to Hong Kong (if I ever do," she added mentally), "you must come, and be my amah again. Good-by, Amah, good-by."

"Yes, Mississee, thank you," said the amah sadly and then, as she heard the sound of feet—a sound for which she had been listening with dread keenness during all the hurried dressing—"My hear Chinaman inside court. Dear Mississee must go—go quick!"

Mrs. Gordon was deathly pale, but at that minute she was conscious of no fear. She knew what horrible fate would be hers if she fell into the power of that Chinese mob, the house deserted even by her own servants, her husband absent, no friend near. But she was brave, and taking the little rice bowl and chop sticks which it had been agreed she was to carry down and out to the amah's quarters, according to the amah's usual custom, began with enforced and exasperating deliberateness her hegira. The amah's quarters consisted merely of a small house within call of her mistress's bedroom, and apart from the quarters of the other servants. Fortunately Emui had been in the habit of using a side verandah door, and not of crossing the courtyard, as the other servants did. From the amah's house Mrs. Gordon was to leave by a door at the back, choosing a propitious moment, and make her way to the English Consulate, and thence to the English gunboat.

She went, with determined leisureliness, down the broad staircase of her home, still brilliantly lighted (she wished it had been less so), and out at the small side-door, meeting no one, but shuddering at the constantly increasing tumult of strange voices in the court. She crossed the lawn, gained the amah's door, unlocked it (never had her fingers seemed so inexpert), and closed it behind her, just before the great courtyard doors swung open, and a strange mob came howling out on the carefully-cropped lawn.

Meanwhile Emui, with the recklessness of desperation, yet with a kind of doglike heroism in her weird, Eastern eyes, had donned her mistress's flowing, white peignoir, let down her masses of black hair, and flinging aside the curtains so that the brilliant lights of the dressing-room streamed out into the night, began to pace up and down in full view of the lawns, trusting in this way to postpone the detection of Mrs. Gordon's escape, and gain time for her mistress.

So she walked back and forth in the beautiful, scented room, awaiting her certain fate.

III.

The English gunboat "Oriole" was filled with a company not usually found on board a man-of-war; —ladies in evening toilette, or still more confessed undress, children more or less *en pajamas*, foreign governesses and nurses in wild agitation, and boat-loads of men in dress suits and boutonnieres, but generally hatless, who knew the resistance of so small a force to be useless, and whose only duty seemed to be that of escorting and protecting the ladies and children to H. M. S. "Oriole." One of the last boat-loads brought an American lady in Chinese native dress, under the escort of the English consul, who had been the last man to leave the burning island of the Shameen.

Behind them gleamed the fitful glare of the fire of their homes, and even the trees, where here and there a massive branch of the camphor or banyan fell to the ground, showed the savage fury of the Chinese mob. Mrs. Gordon shuddered as she glanced fearfully back, and clung closer to her escort.

Just after Mrs. Gordon had gained the shelter of the "Oriole," a light racing paper shell, sculled by an oarsman in the unusual boating costume of full evening dress, even to the chrysanthemum on his lapel, drew swiftly alongside the gunboat. The oarsman, on gaining the deck, threw the dainty shell adrift, with a half sigh. "Pity to let her go, isn't it?" said the young man, turning lightly to the gunboat captain. "Little

beauty of a shell. Just got her out from home. One more loss to-night to the credit of those beastly Chinese. Shall you fire on them, Captain?"

"Oh, we'll give them a shot or two as soon as we're sure there are none of our people left on Shameen, but we don't want to bring the Chinese gunboats down on us yet. My business is to get these ladies and children to Hong Kong."

After a few minutes' talk with the captain, the young man gained the upper deck, where Mrs. Gordon was standing with some other ladies, leaning over the rail and mournfully watching the destruction of her home, which was partly visible from that side of the gunboat.

"D'ye do, Mrs. Gordon!" said the young man, as serenely as though they had met at a ball. "Just saw you coming on board with Challoner Alabaster. I came in a racing-shell, myself. Beautiful boating togs I'm in. Mrs. Gordon, I've been plunging all over Shameen for you to-night. Got a telegram from your husband asking me to take you in charge. Alabaster telegraphed to Hong Kong as soon as we knew of this business. Jack's telegram to me was the last before these blooming pagans cut the lines."

"I should have looked you up in any case," added Lenox, cutting short Mrs. Gordon's murmured thanks, "but every one thought you were at the Consulate. You were there to tennis and at tea, you know."

"Yes," returned the lady. "I only went home to dress. The Alabasters sent young Jewett—consular clerk, you know—and a chair for me. He got into the mob some way and was killed (think how terrible, Mr. Lenox), and the chair coolies ran away. Had it not been for my good amah I should never have escaped. I shall send for her when we get to Hong Kong. I fancy we shall start before long."

Lenox shivered a bit, and leaned over the rail beside Mrs. Gordon. The mention of Emui recalled his last horrible hour on Shameen. Down below he had been giving the Captain a fuller description of his search than he had cared to unfold before its object.

"You see, Captain," Lenox had said, "when I got near the Keecheong hong, I saw I was too late. A deadly fear smote me. I had determined to save Mrs. Gordon at all hazards, of course, and was doing my hardest and most rapid thinking as to the wisest course to pursue when luckily I happened to overhear some words in Chinese that told me the *fanqui lady* had escaped. Of course they knew Emui had helped her. Not only because their well-planned surprise on the wealthy Keecheong hong had been so sudden and complete, but because she must have escaped in disguise or been captured. The way between the Consulate and Keecheong was thick with these devils. That plucky little amah not only aided in her mistress's escape, but what do you think? She put on some of her mistress's togs, and paraded up and down in full view of the mob, with open windows, lights, and all that, you know, so as to make them secure of their prey, and, by delaying the game, to cover Mrs. Gordon's escape. There are not many Europeans who would do better than that. Women? No, nor men either. You can imagine the fury of those demons when they learned the truth. Poor Emui! I hope to heaven it wasn't death by a hundred strokes—they are quite capable of it—but I saw a hand, one of the poor creature's little brown paws, I'm afraid it was, on the grass, with a lot else that was ghastly, when I crawled away. The wing of Mrs. Lenox's rooms was totally destroyed."

"Not a word of this to Mrs. Gordon," the Captain had returned, laying his hand on Lenox's arm. "She thought the world of that amah."

"Do you take me for a blooming idiot, Dwight?" said Lenox, as he withdrew his arm impatiently and sprang up the gangway.

"It is getting very chilly," said Lenox at last, and turning to his companion, "Mrs. Gordon, you have had an awfully exciting day and you must be greatly fagged. What can I do for your comfort? May I not get you another wrap?"

"Mr. Lenox," asked Mrs. Gordon, whose eyes had

been continually riveted on her burning home, and on whose ears Lenox's question fell unheeded, "I am so worried about my amah. Of course you did not see her?" questioning with her eyes, to which he gave an answering look in the negative. "Do you suppose—are you quite, quite sure she is safe from harm?"

"I am quite—absolutely sure she is safe from harm," Lenox answered slowly, looking his companion in the eye unflinchingly (Lenox felt he could lie scientifically, if lie he must), and then, as the lady glanced across at the Shameen again with a sigh and a shudder —"really, my dear Mrs. Gordon," he added, "I must insist upon your going below and getting some tea. You are shivering, and this view is too depressing for you. Let me take you down."

And Mrs. Gordon, in her Chinese garments, with the little jade ornaments still thrust through her hair, went below—and drank tea.

There is no subject more fascinating in this era than hypnotism. Transmitted hypnotism is the latest phase of this extraordinary phenomenon. The following charming vagary upon this curious theme, from the pen of Anatole France, has been translated for ROMANCE by Mrs. T. C. Crawford.

A HYPNOTIZED CAT.

I HAVE, as every one knows, devoted my entire life to Egyptian archæology. I should be ungrateful to my country, to science, and to myself if I regretted having been led to the path which I have followed for forty years. My works have not been sterile. I can say without conceit that my "Memoir on the Handle of an Egyptian Mirror in the Museum of the Louvre" can still be consulted with profit, although its writing dates from my début in science. As for the somewhat voluminous work that I have lately consecrated to one of the bronze weights found in 1851 in the excavations at Serapeon, I should be ungrateful not to think well of it, since it opened to me the doors of the Institute.

Encouraged by the flattering reception that my researches in this direction have received from my new colleagues, I was tempted for a moment to undertake a life work upon the weights and measures in use in Alexandria in the reign of Ptolemy Aulete (80–52, B.C.). But I soon recognized that such a general subject could not be treated by a true scholar, and that serious science could not approach the subject without risk of involving itself in all sorts of adventures. I felt that in considering several subjects at the same time there was danger of wandering away from the fundamental principles of archæology.

My third work, I hasten to say, was wisely conceived. It was an essay entitled "On the Toilette of an Egyptian Woman of the Middle Empire, from an Unpublished Painting." I did not introduce a single general idea.

I kept close to my subject. I kept myself from those considerations, from those illustrations and those points of view by which certain of my colleagues ruin the explanation of the most beautiful discoveries. Why should so sound a work have such a strange destiny? By what turn of fate did it become the cause of the most monstrous disorders of my mind? But let us not anticipate events or confuse dates. My essay was to be read at a public meeting of the five academies, an honor much more precious because rarely bestowed on productions of such a character. These academical reunions during the last few years have been largely attended by fashionable people.

On the day of my reading the large room was filled with a brilliant crowd. Among the audience were many ladies. Pretty faces and rich toilettes shone in the rows of seats. My reading was listened to with respect. It was not interrupted by those thoughtless and noisy manifestations that literary work often provokes. No; the audience maintained an attitude quite in harmony with the essay presented to them. It was serious and grave.

In order to better separate the thoughts, I paused between the phrases, and so had leisure to examine attentively over my spectacles the entire audience. I can say that no trace of smiles was to be detected on the face of any one! The freshest faces took on an austere expression. It seemed that by enchantment I had caused all these minds to mature. Here and there while I read, young people whispered in the ears of their neighbors. Without doubt they discussed some special point of my essay.

But better still! A young lady of twenty-two or twenty-four years of age, seated in an angle of the north row of seats, not only listened attentively, but took notes as well. Her face presented a delicacy of feature and a nobility of expression which were truly remarkable. The attention that she gave to my words added a charm to her strange face. She was not alone. A tall, robust man, wearing, like the Assyrian kings, a

long, curling black beard and long black hair, was seated by her, and from time to time addressed her a few words in a low tone of voice. My attention, which at first was divided among my audience, gradually concentrated itself upon this young woman. She inspired me with an interest that certain of my colleagues would consider unworthy of a scientific mind. But I am sure, in the same situation, they would not have been more indifferent than I. As I spoke, she scribbled in a little note-book; plainly she experienced while listening to me the most contrary emotions, from contentment and joy even to surprise and uneasiness. I examined her with a growing curiosity. Would to God I had never seen her save that day under the cupola!

I had nearly finished; there only remained twenty-five or thirty pages, at the most, to read, when my eyes suddenly met those of the man with the Assyrian beard. How can I explain what then took place, when I do not myself understand it? All that I can say is, that the look of this person caused me at once the most inconceivable uneasiness. The balls of those eyes which regarded me were fixed and greenish. I could not turn away from them. I remained mute, with my head thrown back. As I stopped speaking, there was applause. Silence being re-established, I wished to continue my reading. But in spite of the most violent efforts, I could not tear my eyes away from the two living lights on which they were mysteriously riveted. That was not all. By a phenomenon still more inconceivable, I, contrary to the habit of my entire life, commenced an improvisation. Heaven knows that it was wholly involuntary! Under the influence of a strange force, unknown, irresistible, I recited with elegance and warmth a philosophical dissertation on the toilette of women in different centuries.

The man with the Assyrian beard did not cease looking at me fixedly while I spoke. Finally I dropped my eyes and was silent. It grieves me to add that these last words, as much a stranger to my own inspiration as contrary to scientific facts, were received with

enthusiastic applause. The young lady in the north row of seats applauded with her hands and smiled.

I was followed by a member of the French academy, who was plainly not pleased to be obliged to speak after me. His fears were perhaps exaggerated. The essay which he read was listened to with no great impatience. I believe that it was written in verse.

The meeting ended. I left the hall in company with several of my confrères, who renewed their congratulations with a sincerity in which I wished to believe.

Stopping a moment on the quay near the lions of Creuzot to shake hands with my friends, I saw the man with the Assyrian beard and his beautiful companion enter a brougham. By chance I was at that moment by the side of an eloquent philosopher, who was said to be as well versed in worldly elegancies as in cosmic theories. The young woman, putting her delicate head out of the carriage-window and reaching her hand toward him, called him by name and said with a slight English accent:

"Dear friend, you forget me. That is not kind."

As the brougham moved on, I asked my illustrious confrère who this charming young lady and her companion were.

"What!" he replied. "You do not know Miss Morgan and her physician Daoud, who treats all maladies by magnetism, hypnotism and suggestion? Annie Morgan is the daughter of the richest merchant in Chicago. She came to Paris with her mother two years ago. She has had a marvellous house built on the Avenue de L'Imperatrice. She is well educated and has a wonderful mind."

"You do not surprise me," I answered. "I already had some reason to believe that this American young lady has a very serious mind."

My brilliant friend smiled as he pressed my hand.

I continued my way on foot to the Street St. Jacques, where, during thirty years I have lived in a modest house, from the roof of which can be seen the tops of

the trees of the Luxembourg. I entered my house and seated myself at once at my writing-table.

I remained there three days working assiduously, seated opposite a statuette representing the goddess Pacht with her cat's head. This little figure has an inscription not correctly understood by M. Grebault. I have prepared an excellent article on this inscription, with a commentary. My adventure at the institute left a less lively impression on me than I could have hoped for. I was not very much troubled. To tell the truth, I had even almost forgotten it, and new experiences were necessary to recall it to me.

I had then leisure to continue my essay and commentary. I interrupted my archæological work only to read the newspapers, which were filled with my praises. Even those papers without any claims to a literary character spoke with praise of the "charming fragment" which terminated my essay. "It is a revelation," they said, "and M. Pigeonneau has given the most agreeable surprise." I do not know why I repeat such bagatelles, for I am quite indifferent to what may be said of me in the press.

Now I had been shut up in my writing-room for three days when the ringing of my door-bell startled me. There was something imperious, fantastic, and unknown communicated to the wire by the pulling of the knob, which troubled me, and it was with real anxiety that I went myself to open the door. Whom did I find on the landing place? The young American who was lately so attentive to the reading of my essay, Miss Morgan in person.

"Monsieur Pigeonneau?"

"I am he."

"I know you well, although you no longer wear your beautiful coat with the green palms. But, I beg, do not put it on for me. I like you much better in your dressing-gown."

I invited her into my work-room. She cast a curious glance on the papyri, the prints and pictures of all kinds which covered the walls to the ceiling. Then

she looked for some time at the goddess Pacht which was on my table. At last:

"She is charming," she said.

"You are speaking of this little statue? It has indeed a rather curious inscription. But may I inquire to what circumstance I am indebted for this visit?"

"Oh!" she replied, "I do not trouble myself with the particulars of an inscription. She has a cat's face of an exquisite delicacy. You believe that she is a true goddess, do you not, Monsieur Pigeonneau?"

I defended myself against such an injurious suspicion.

"Such a belief," said I, "would be fetichism."

She turned her large green eyes on me with surprise.

"Ah! You are not a fetich. I did not believe that one could be an archæologist without being a fetich. How can Pacht interest you if you do not believe that she is a goddess? But never mind that. I have come to see you, Monsieur Pigeonneau, with regard to a very important affair."

"Very important?"

"Yes. With regard to a costume. Look at me."

"With pleasure."

"Do you not find that my profile has certain characteristics of the Egyptian race?"

I did not know how to reply. Such a conversation was quite outside of my line. She continued:

"Oh! It is not astonishing. I remember having been an Egyptian. And you, Monsieur Pigeonneau, were you also formerly an Egyptian? You do not remember? It is strange. You do not disbelieve, at least, that we pass through a series of successive incarnations?"

"I do not know, Mademoiselle."

"You surprise me, Monsieur Pigeonneau."

"Would you kindly tell me to what I owe the honor——?"

"I beg your pardon, I have not yet told you that I have come to beg you to aid me to compose an Egyptian costume for the costume-ball at the house of Countess N—. I wish to have a costume perfectly correct and of a stu-

pefying beauty. I have already worked a great deal over it. I have consulted my recollections, for I can very well recall having lived at Thebes six thousand years ago. I have had designs made in London and New York."

"That is the surest way."

"No, nothing is surer than an inner revelation. I have also studied the Egyptian museum at the Louvre. It is full of the most ravishing things. Of forms slender and pure, of profiles with the most delicate lines, of women who look like flowers, and have an indescribable stiffness and suppleness at the same time! And a goddess who resembles M. Sarcey! Oh! you have no idea how beautiful they are!"

"My dear young lady, I do not yet know——"

"That is not all. I went to hear your essay on the toilette of a woman of the middle empire, and took notes. Your article was a little difficult to understand, but I worked hard. From all these documents, I have composed a costume. It is not yet just right. I have come to beg you to correct it. Come to my house to-morrow, please. Do that for the love of Egypt. It is understood? To-morrow! I am going now. Mamma is waiting for me in the carriage."

While pronouncing these last words, she flitted away. I followed her. When I reached the ante-chamber, she was already at the foot of the stairs, from whence I heard her clear voice crying:

"To-morrow! Avenue Bois-de-Boulogne. At the corner of the Villa Saïd."

"I will not go to this crazy person's house," I said to myself.

The next day at four o'clock I rang the bell at her door. A servant showed me into an immense glass hall filled with pictures and statues of marble and bronze; sedan chairs filled with porcelains; Peruvian mummies; a dozen forms of men and horses covered with armor that harmonized with their tall figures; a Polish cavalier, on whose back were fastened white wings; and a French cavalier in a tourney costume. A

perfect forest of palms in pots stood about the hall. In the centre of the room was seated a gigantic golden Buddha. At the foot of the god, an old woman poorly clad was reading a Bible. I was still dazzled by so many marvels, when Miss Morgan, raising a purple cloth portière, appeared to me. She wore a white gown, bordered with swan's down. She advanced toward me. Two immense Danish dogs, with long muzzles, followed her.

"I knew perfectly well that you would come, Monsieur Pigeonneau."

I stammered a compliment.

"How could one refuse so charming a person?"

"Oh! it is not because I am pretty that nothing is refused me. But because I have secrets which cause others to obey me."

Then turning toward the old lady reading the Bible, she said:

"Pay no attention to her; it is Mamma. If you spoke to her, she would not answer. She belongs to a religious sect which forbids needless words. It is the last novelty among the sects. The believers dress themselves in sacking, and eat out of wooden porringers. Mamma amuses herself very much with these practices. But you know I have not invited you here to talk of Mamma. I am going to put on my Egyptian costume. It will not take long. While waiting, look at some of these little things."

She made me sit down before a cabinet which contained the coffin of a mummy, several statues of the Middle Empire and some fragments of a beautiful funeral ritual. Alone, I examined this papyrus with even more interest because on it I saw a name which I had seen before on a seal. It was the name of a scribe of the time of Seti the First. I commenced at once to build various interesting theories from the documents. I had been plunged in this work for some time, just how long I do not know, when I was warned by a sort of instinct that some one was behind me. I turned and saw a marvellous creature, her hair confined in a golden

net, and dressed in a narrow, sheath-like gown, all white, which revealed the adorable and youthful lines of her figure. Over this sheath fell a light, rose-colored tunic, fastened at the waist by a band of precious stones, the ends falling wide apart and forming symmetrical folds in the gown. The arms and feet were bare, the fingers and toes being covered with rings.

She stood facing me, turning her head toward her right shoulder, in an attitude which gave an almost indescribable divinity to her beauty.

"What!" I cried. "It is you, Miss Morgan?"

"If it is not Néférou-ra in person. You know the Néférou-ra of Leconte de Lisle, the Beauty of the Sun?

> "'Voici qu' elle languit sur son lit virginal,
> Très pâle, enveloppée avec des fines toiles.'

But you do not know! You do not know poetry. Poetry, however, is very pretty! Come to work."

Having mastered my emotion, I made some remarks to this ravishing creature on her costume. I ventured to dispute several details which were not of an archæological exactitude. I proposed replacing the setting of the rings with certain stones more common in that age. Finally, I decidedly opposed the wearing of an agraffe of Cloisonné enamel. In truth, this ornament was an odious anachronism. We decided to substitute for it a gold plaque, with precious stones inserted in small cells.

She listened to me with extreme docility, and was so well pleased that she wished me to dine with her. I excused myself, pleading the regularity of my habits and the frugality of my régime as an excuse, and took leave of her.

I was in the ante-chamber when she called after me:

"Wait a moment. Is my costume striking enough? I must make all the other women jealous."

I was shocked at such a thought, but turning toward her again, I fell under her charm.

She called me back.

"Monsieur Pigeonneau, you are so amiable! Write

a little story for me, and I shall like you so very, very much."

"I do not know how," I answered.

She shrugged her beautiful shoulders and cried:

"Of what use then is science to us if it does not serve as a basis for stories? You will write me a story, Monsieur Pigeonneau."

Thinking it useless to renew my absolute refusal, I withdrew without replying.

I met at the door the man with the Assyrian beard, Dr. Daoud, whose look had so troubled me under the dome of the institute. He seemed to me a most vulgar man, and the meeting with him was absolutely painful to me.

The ball of Countess N— took place fifteen days after my visit. I was not surprised to read in the papers that the beautiful Miss Morgan had made a sensation in the costume of Néférou-ra.

I heard nothing more of her during the year 1886; but the first day of the new year, as I was writing in my room, a valet brought me a letter and a basket.

"From Miss Morgan," he said, and went out.

The basket was placed on my table. The sound of a cat's voice came from it. I lifted the cover, and a small gray cat jumped out.

It was not an Angora. It was of an Oriental species, more slender than our cats, and resembling, as far as I could judge, its ancestors, whose mummies, enveloped in great bands, are now found in such large numbers at Thebes. It shook itself, looked around, humped its back, yawned, and then began rubbing itself against the goddess Pacht, whose pure figure and fine, pointed nose were raised over my table. Although of a sombre color and with its fur shaven, the little cat was very gracious. It seemed intelligent and not wild. I could not understand the reason for such a strange present. Miss Morgan's letter did not enlighten me much, either. It ran thus:

"DEAR SIR:—I send you a little cat that Dr. Daoud brought from Egypt and which I love very much. Treat

it kindly for love of me. I do not need to remind you that you owe me a story. You will bring it Kings' Day. We will dine together. ANNIE MORGAN.

"P. S.—The name of your little cat is Porou."

After having read this letter, I looked at Porou, who, standing on his hind feet, licked the black nose of Pacht, his divine sister. He looked at me, and I must say that of us two he was not the more astonished.

I asked myself, "What does this all mean?"

But I soon stopped trying to comprehend it. "It is very silly in me," I said to myself, "to look for sense in the foolishness of a young flyaway. As for this little animal, Madame Magloire, my housekeeper, will provide for it." I returned to my work on chronology, which was much more interesting to me, as I handled a little roughly in it my eminent confrère, Monsieur Maspero. Porou did not leave my table. Seated in front of me with ears erect, he watched me write. For some inconceivable reason I could not write that day. My ideas were confused; there ran in my thoughts scraps of songs, and shreds of stories. I went to bed thoroughly out of temper with myself.

The next morning, I found Porou seated on my table licking his paws. That day again I could not write. Porou and I passed the hours of daylight in looking at each other. The next day, and the next, and, in short, all the week, went in the same way. I was in despair. But I must confess that little by little I grew to endure my trouble with patience, and even with gayety. The rapidity with which an honest man becomes depraved is frightful.

Epiphany Sunday I rose in a very happy state of mind and ran to my table, where Porou, as was his custom, had preceded me. I took a pad of beautiful white paper, dipped my pen in the ink, and wrote in large letters under the eyes of my new friend: "*The Misfortunes of a One-eyed Messenger.*" Then, with the eyes of Porou still upon me, I wrote all day, with a prodigious rapidity, a recital of adventures so marvellous, so pleas-

ant, so various, that I was myself quite diverted. My one-eyed porter mixed up bundles, and made the most comical mistakes. Two lovers who found themselves in a critical position received help from him without his knowing it. He carried wardrobes with men concealed in them, and these he introduced into a house and frightened some old ladies. But how can I describe such a lively story? Twenty times I burst out laughing while writing. If Porou himself did not laugh, his grave air was as pleasant as the most hilarious manner. It was seven o'clock in the evening when I wrote the last line of this agreeable work. Since one o'clock the room had been lighted only by the phosphorescent eyes of Porou. I had written as easily in the obscurity as by the light of a good lamp. My story finished, I dressed myself. I put on my black coat and my white cravat, and then, taking leave of Porou, I descended rapidly the staircase and hurried into the street. I had not taken twenty steps when I felt a pull at my sleeve.

"Uncle, where are you running to? You look like a somnambulist."

It was my nephew Macel who questioned me in this manner. A good and intelligent young man, a student at Salpètrière, every one said he would succeed at medicine. And, in truth, he had a good enough mind if he would but hold his capricious imagination more in check.

"Oh!" I replied, "I am going to carry a story of my making to Miss Morgan."

"What, uncle! you know Miss Morgan? She is very pretty. Do you also know Dr. Daoud, who follows her everywhere?"

"An empiric, a charlatan."

"Without doubt, Uncle, but at the same time an extraordinary experimenter. Bernheim, Liegeois or Charcot himself has never obtained such phenomena as he produces at will. He can produce hypnotism and suggestion without contact, without direct action by the intermediary of an animal. Ordinarily, he uses for his

experiments small cats with shaven bodies. This is how he proceeds. He suggests some act to the cat, then he sends it in a basket to the subject on which he wishes to act. The animal transmits the suggestion that he has received, and the patient under this influence executes the commands of the operator."

"Is this the truth?"

"The exact truth, uncle."

"And what is Miss Morgan's part in these beautiful experiments?"

"Miss Morgan, uncle, makes Daoud work for her amusement by using hypnotism and suggestion to cause people to do ridiculous things. As if her beauty ought not to suffice for that!"

I listened to nothing more. An irresistible force drew me to Miss Morgan.

People frequently meet pleasant companions during their summer rambles, whom they afterward find to be in a very different walk of life from what they had imagined. The fisherman in the following story had a similar experience. It is by André Theuriet, and was translated for ROMANCE by Mrs. Carlton A. Kingsbury.

AT THE THREE PIGEONS.

WHEN I was about thirty years old, I went fishing one Sunday on the banks of the Cher, near Saint-Avertin. It was at Easter time, a little warm but quite pleasant near the water. I had installed myself in an excellent place. At my feet the brownish-green water wound tranquilly in and out between grassy banks. Daisies and field-flowers grew on either side close to the water's edge. I heard from time to time the bells of Agaz and Saint-Avertin ringing for service, and I took great pleasure in the thought that it was Sunday, that I had a long day before me, that I had no unpleasant neighbors to disturb me in my enjoyable occupation.

I had unhappily reckoned without my host. About three o'clock I saw appear, behind the poplars, a couple who placed themselves on the other side of my rod, about ten feet distant.

They were a middle-aged man and a lady, young and very pretty. The gentleman, clean-shaven, clothed entirely in black, had a very correct air and a very severe countenance; the lady in a grey dress and straw capote trimmed with blue ribbons, was blonde, plump, and very lively. They carried a fishing-rod, and the husband made his wife sit down while he adjusted the rod and arranged the bait.

Without appearing to watch them, I soon perceived that they were novices in the art.

"Good!" thought I. "They are amateurs and will

not trouble me unless they frighten away the fish with their chattering."

They caught nothing. On the other hand, in less than an hour I had my basket half-full. My neighbors were still unsuccessful. Finally, the young woman, disgusted, threw down her rod and strolled slowly toward me. At the moment she reached me, I landed a large perch, and I took a mean pleasure in leaving him flopping about on the grass, before putting him into my basket.

"Oh," cried the young woman, "what a beautiful fish"—then in an insinuating voice she added:

"Monsieur, how do you catch so many fish while we have not been able to take even a *bleak?*"

I was young then, and though I was always timid in the presence of women, I was not insensible to a pretty face. I replied, therefore, as gallantly as I could:

"Oh, Madam, it is only that you do not understand. To fish with a line is a more difficult art than one thinks. But if you will follow my advice I will show you how to fish. Here, seat yourself, I will prepare your hook."

I showed my pupil the tricks of the rod, of which she seemed to be entirely ignorant. After a few instructions she did fairly well. The spot was a good one, and the fish allowed themselves to be taken.

At each lucky pull at the line, the little lady laughed like a child, clapped her hands, turned toward her husband, who, gravely smiling, seemed very happy in his wife's joy, and thanked me with a ceremonious politeness.

At last the afternoon waned. About six o'clock we stopped fishing, and I was about to take leave of my companions, when the young woman ran to her husband and whispered to him. He listened with a thoughtful air, evidently a little startled. After a moment I saw them coming toward me, but it was the lady who said to me:

"Monsieur, you have been so kind to us that we can-

not leave you in this way. It is owing to your goodness that we have caught these fish, and it is but right that we should eat them in company. Will you give us the pleasure of dining with us?"

The gentleman added his invitation to that of his wife. They urged me in such a cordial way that I accepted and we went to Saint-Avertin.

At the "Three Pigeons" the husband asked for a private parlor and ordered dinner. We were pleasantly served in a room where windows opened wide upon a garden filled with flowers.

The fresh air had sharpened our appetites. Besides our fish we had a roast-fowl, asparagus, a tart, and Vouvray wine. I was seated at the right of the pretty lady, who laughed constantly, and who did not leave my plate or glass empty for a moment.

The husband was less jovial; he wore a constrained smile, and even the wine did not have the effect of loosening his tongue. At certain moments he seemed almost embarrassed. I had taken upon myself the duty of carving the fowl, and, sharpening my knife, I cried gayly:

"Pass the fowl to me, I know how to carve, and I can cut off heads in great style."

I was astonished at the small success of my pleasantry. The husband reddened to his eyes, his wife turned pale, and a dead silence reigned in the room.

They were very reserved about their affairs. I had put adroit questions, because I was anxious to know with whom I had dined,—but they answered in a very evasive way. All that I could learn was that they were staying at Tours, and that they lived at Orleans.

When we had taken our coffee, night had fallen and it was time to depart. I had done justice to the repast, and was very gay; before leaving, I thanked them warmly for their hospitality, and declared that I had never enjoyed myself better than in their society. That made the young woman smile, and I cordially extended my hand to her husband, who, after a moment's hesitation, gave me his. I shall never forget

the strange sensation I experienced when I grasped that icy hand.

"I hope that we may meet again," I said, "when I may have the pleasure of returning your hospitality."

"I do not believe that," he said, with a singular accent. "We leave Tours to-morrow. Adieu! Monsieur."

In fact, I never did meet them again at Saint-Avertin, although I went every Sunday. I often thought with pleasure of the good dinner which I had eaten at the "Three Pigeons."

Three months passed. One day I was exceedingly busy at my desk in the office when some one entered and presented at the wicket a check. In those days we frequently had checks presented for payment for public services. I took the paper, without looking at the person who handed it in, to my chief to sign. Returning, I was curious enough to read it.

It was an order for three hundred francs to be paid to the bearer, M. Bleiger, "High Executioner."

What was my horror when I reached the wicket to recognize in the "high executioner" my host at the "Three Pigeons" and the husband of the pretty lady.

I then remembered that an execution had take place at Tours the day before my fishing excursion.

I had dined with the *headsman!*

One pities, after reading this charming sketch, the poet who has no grandfather. It would seem to be the next thing to a genuine inspiration. "The First Edition" was translated for ROMANCE from the French of Jacques Normand.

THE FIRST EDITION.

"MY DEAR SIR:—We have the pleasure of announcing to you that it is desirable to reissue your volume *The Swallows*, the first edition being entirely out of print.

"Will you be so kind as to stop in and see us, that we may make arrangements with you about it?

"Accept, etc., etc.,

"MASSOL BROS., Publishers."

"When I received that letter, I thought I should die of joy and astonishment, even more of astonishment than of joy," said the celebrated dramatist, Henry Didier, the other day, as he showed us the letter; then, noticing our interest, he gave us the whole history of the affair as follows:

The first edition of *The Swallows*, my first book, and a volume of verses, out of print! and I, scarcely twenty years old, knew no one in Paris; no editorial had been written about it, nothing had appeared concerning it, except some paid notices on the fourth page of the journals! And how long had this unhoped-for and improbable event been in coming to pass? Just one month!

This was success then, true success?

So I had talent? I was beginning to be appreciated by those contemporaries whom I had slandered up to this time, accusing them of disliking all poetry, and considering them uncultivated in their tastes?

I would not stop writing at all now; after this volume there should be a second—I had even been working on it in my dreams! Then would come the theater,

that powerful spring-board which, all at once, sends one into full renown and glory, up among the stars! And a novel? Why should I not also write a novel? I was already dreaming over profound psychological studies, over accurate and thrilling descriptions. My brain was at work; and my head humming with all the ambitious follies of one's twentieth year. Again and again I read the blessed letter, as I tramped back and forth in my room, radiant and gesticulating wildly.

"Well, what is the matter, my boy?"

The door stood slightly ajar, and my grandfather's face appeared in the opening; it was a kindly face, calm, rosy and clean-shaven, with a strong nose, and eyes shining behind their glasses, and was framed in a well-combed and carefully curled wig.

"What is the matter with me, grandfather? Wait, read this!"

When he had glanced through the letter, he said: "Well, what about it? I think your verses are very pretty!"

"But think, grandfather! It is an unexpected success! Verses are no longer read!"

"Yours are read. That ought to be enough for you!"

"I should think so!"

"Then you are happy?"

"Yes, I am happy!"

"That is all that is necessary!"

He opened his snuff-box, and slowly took a pinch, looking at me all the time with a smile in his eyes.

A quarter of an hour after, I was with Massol Brothers.

All the literary world knows this celebrated publishing house, and has seen its busy employés, librarians and clerks in the vast hall lighted from above, and lined with row upon row of carefully classified volumes in white, yellow and blue bindings. Wooden galleries run along the wall, dividing it into two floors, and books

and papers are continually pulled up or let down by small pulleys. It is a kind of intellectual factory of which printed thought is the never-failing product.

With a bound, I climbed to the first floor, to the office of the elder Massol, whose special business it is to receive authors.

I found the office closed, and the sound of voices came from it; the patron was occupied. I sat down on a bench, awaiting my turn, and, as I waited, I called to mind my feelings the first time I had come here. With what a beating heart I climbed the staircase, my manuscript under my arm! And, when I entered Massol's office, how I trembled all over! He received me politely but coldly, and he had reason to, after all! I, an unknown youth of twenty years, had brought him what? Verses! a commodity seldom sold by a publisher. A romance still sells—but verses!

However, he had consented to publish them, on condition, of course, that I paid the entire expense; and since then I had experienced all the emotions awakened by a first book. The proofs had come, still quite damp from the press, and full of mistakes that drove me to despair, and of which there seemed to be no end; there were innumerable grammatical questions and doubts about punctuation; continually renewed contests with the printer, whom I privately considered an imbecile, and who repaid me in the same coin; I had the table of contents to make and the title to compose in such a way as to attract the purchaser's eye, and the color of the binding to choose; then it was *ready for press*, three little words that sound so small but which are everything in reality, since they send forth the author's thought to the public, as, at the theater, the three strokes of the bell before the curtain rises announce the piece to the audience; finally, the new and elegant looking volumes appeared in the book-sellers' windows, and on the boulevard.

After a few moments Massol's office opened and X., the academician, came out, accompanied as far as the

door by the bowing publisher. This man was a good client, and they paid him a great deal of attention. Should I ever reach that distinction?

Massol, looking very kind and almost paternal, motioned me to enter. He begged me to be seated and said, as he pompously sat down in his leather arm-chair:

"You received our letter?"

"Yes, Monsieur Massol."

"A volume of verses sold out in a month! Between you and me, I cannot understand it at all!"

This was not very flattering; but I had been too much astonished myself not to excuse his astonishment.

"What has happened to your book is very queer," continued he, "people buy it, but no one talks about it. It is the first time I ever saw that happen in the book trade. It is very queer, very queer!"

Before we separated, it was agreed that five hundred new copies of *The Swallows* should be printed immediately, so as not to miss the sale. In fact, a few days after that, I saw my dear volume majestically displayed by the book-sellers and ornamented with that flattering statement: SECOND EDITION.

Decidedly I was somebody. Nevertheless, Massol's remark troubled me a little. No one talked of my book, no one seemed to have read it except those to whom I had sent copies.

"After all," I said to myself, "I am very foolish to torment myself this way. Since *The Swallows* sells, some one buys *The Swallows*. What more can I ask? Besides, the book contains only love verses and verses of passion, and it must be women who buy it! Yes, women!"

Intoxicated by this thought, I imagined my blue-covered book in the hands of all the great ladies in the noble faubourg, who read it in their beds at night and went to sleep dreaming about it.

Encouraged by this first success, I went eagerly to work. I wrote my first play, *The Grandmother*, which, as you know, had an opportunity to succeed at the

Odéon; then came the *Victims of Marriage* at the Gymnase, the *Two Brothers* at the Comédie Française, then still others. I was becoming a full-fledged author, as we say; years passed, and I thought no more of my *Swallows*, the timid and forgotten work of my youth.

It was at this time that I experienced one of the great griefs of my life: I lost my dear grandfather. He gradually wore out, cared for and loved by us all to his last hour. He had one of those rare natures in which egotism finds no place, and whose active kindness recoils before no trouble that may bring some joy to loved ones; one of those tender and delicate souls always forgetting themselves to think only of others, considering themselves amply repaid by a smile, and finding their happiness in the pleasures they are able to give.

I shall always remember the sadness with which we entered his rooms, a month after the dear man's death. They had remained just as they were, the old furniture and familiar objects reminding us of him.

Rays of sun-light slipping through the window-blinds fell obliquely upon the flowered carpet, making slender golden bars in which the dust was dancing. We walked on tip-toe and spoke in low tones. It seemed as if he must still be there in the big bed with drawn curtains, or in the arm-chair he had loved, or by the table where he used to spread his newspaper or make up his accounts, with that wholesome exactness which he carried into the smallest details of life.

A servant, recently come into the house, opened the blinds abruptly, indifferent to an emotion which he could not understand. Suddenly the whole room was filled with light from outside and with it came a flood of fresh air, bringing the roar of the street. Death was allowing life to enter; and, with life, cruel necessities.

The dear man's rooms were to be rented: the furniture must be removed, the wardrobes emptied, and all made clean for the stranger who was coming to take his place. The dead go quickly, especially in large cities, those immense hives in perpetual activity. Scarcely is a cell emptied of its humming life when an-

other life installs itself there, ignorant alike of that which has preceded it and that which will follow.

The moving commenced, and I was sadly affected. It seemed to me as if all that still remained of my grandfather was being scattered and consumed, little by little.

Some one, pointing out to me the lower part of the cupboard which he had just opened, exclaimed in an astonished tone: "Henry! Come and see!"

I looked immediately and I saw—oh! dear grandfather! dear and excellent man!—I saw the lower shelves filled with uncut volumes all alike, bound in the blue covers I knew so well—*The Swallows! The Swallows!*

The first edition of my book was there, almost entire—that edition so quickly bought up, "*which people buy and about which no one talks*," as Massol had said. My grandfather had bought it. He was that mysterious public; he, those beautiful duchesses whom I had imagined devouring my verses, propped up in the midst of their lace pillows!

I kneeled down and, with trembling hand, touched the volumes, at the same time both spotless and old. The stamps of the most distant book-sellers were on some of them. One came from the boulevard du Temple, another from the galleries of the Odéon. All the time that I was handling them, I seemed to see the dear man again setting out on foot and hurrying to the four corners of Paris to buy his grandson's book! I could see him enter the shop, proudly ask for "*The Swallows*, by Henry Didier," take two or three copies (as many as he could without awakening the merchant's suspicion) and carry them under his arm, laughing to himself at his touching ruse. As soon as he entered, he would run quickly to this cupboard and conceal his booty, happy to see the row growing longer and longer. He had kept his secret for all these years. His delicacy had not wanted the thanks to which it had so many rights!

And then I remembered the expression he had used

as he smiled behind his glasses the day I received the letter from Massol: "You are happy, little one? Well, that is all that is necessary!"

Yes, I was happy, dear grandfather! No success that I have had since that time has made me as happy as I was when I learned that the first edition of my first book was all gone. I know now why it was gone. I know your innocent cunning, and to my former joy is added deep gratitude to you. Do I love you more? I could not; but your touching attention has proved to me that the most pleasing and the most sublime thing in the world is kindness.

As Henry Didier stopped speaking, a tear ran down his cheek. We were all affected by his sweet story and remained silent around him.

This thrilling story of life in the wild settlements of early New England has been written for ROMANCE by Emilie Egan. It will be of especial interest to younger readers.

CHASED BY WOLVES.

THE incidents of this story happened something more than a hundred and twenty-five years ago, to three children who lived in a settlement on the Ompompanoosuc River, about two miles from where it enters the Connecticut. The story was told me by an old lady. Her grandfather had often related it to her as a reminiscence of his childhood.

I will try to tell it as it was given me. But I cannot hope to make it seem so real as she did.

My readers will recollect that, though this incident really happened in Vermont, Vermont was then only an undivided part of the New Hampshire Grants, and its settlement was continually disputed by numerous wild beasts, Indians and "Yorkers." Its settlers, however, were of the hardiest and bravest of men and women, and it was not strange that their children should partake of their courage and endurance.

Thursa and Ziba Sargent, thirteen and nine years old respectively, were much like children of our own day, fond of going "a visiting." At the lower end of the settlement lived their cousin, Isaac Sargent, a lad of eleven, who a few weeks before had had his leg broken by a falling tree, while in the woods with his father.

It was afternoon, about the middle of January, cold, with a sharp wind, but sunshiny, when Thursa and Ziba asked permission to take their box-handsled down and give Isaac a ride, which was readily granted.

The better to appreciate what Thursa did that day, a description of the handsled will be necessary. It

differed greatly from the natty little steel-shod affairs of to-day. It was made for service, and to last, like the deacon's "one-hoss shay." It was fully four feet long, two feet and a half wide, with runners, usually found grown to the shape, and held together by three stout cross-beams. It was finished by a top-rail, running lengthwise, in which holes were made for stakes. The tongue—the length of the sled—was split at the bottom, where it was pinned securely into mortises made in the roller, the two rounded ends of which were inserted in the curve of the runners. A pin through the upper end of the tongue, to draw by, finished the sled proper. All the work on it had been done with an ax, a cold-chisel and a burning-iron. The box—for it had a real board box, a relic of their mother's Connecticut home—was fastened to the sled by rawhide thongs, wound from stake to stake and around each end. It made a very comfortable riding-place for little folks, as well as a convenient vehicle for carrying other things.

The sharp wind blowing up the river was little minded by Thursa and Ziba, muffled as they were in their warm homespun clothes, fur caps, tippets and mittens; for though they sometimes complained of the clumsy warmth of their garments, they never complained of being cold, and they prepared with great glee for their run down the "glare-frozen" river.

"You must get home by four o'clock, children," called their mother, as she stood in the door, watching them climb down the bank to the river.

"Yes'm, we will," shouted Ziba; busy urging his sister to get into the box. "Just you hold up the tongue, Thursa, and I'll give you a splendid ride!"

Suiting the action to the word, he took hold of the end-board—the better to keep his feet on the smooth ice—and started at a tremendous pace down the river; and the mother heard, with a smile, their shouts of merry laughter long after they had turned the bend, half the distance to their uncle's cabin.

Isaac was soon ready for his ride, and they were

on the ice again, this time with Thursa holding the tongue.

"Guns and Indians! but isn't this nice!" shouted Ziba, pushing vigorously behind, as they dashed past the last house in the settlement.

"You mustn't push so hard!" called back his sister, "I can hardly keep my feet."

"You needn't run, Thursa; just put your two feet together and slide," was his gallant reply, "I'll do the running for both of us."

To such good purpose did he do the running that before they even suspected how fast he was going, they were down upon the Connecticut, where with a slide and a whirl he steered the sled down that river.

"Oh; but we mustn't go on to the big river, Ziba!" cried Thursa, struggling to stop the sled, "I'm afraid it won't be frozen over."

"Yes; 'tis, too," he answered, slacking up a little for argument. "The two trappers that come up yesterday said it was 'frozen as hard as the booming cliff.'"

"But perhaps we oughtn't to go," she pleaded. "Mother mayn't like it."

"She won't care about it," he cried, glancing wistfully down the smooth, glistening level before him, "if we only get home at the time bid."

After a little more persuasion, Thursa was induced to go on. She stipulated, however, that they should keep close to the shore, for fear the river might not be frozen in the middle.

The importance of gaining his own way put new strength and speed into Ziba's propelling powers, and off they went, their excitement and enjoyment much augmented by shouts and calls in imitation of all the sounds known to them, occasionally interspersed with screams of laughter, at success or failure, till their shrill young voices seemed to make a perfect circle with the echoes. The excitement and noise ran high until Ziba began to grow tired. Then he slacked up, pleading for himself a slide, "to rest from running," he said.

"Why, yes;" cried the generous Thursa, "I was

having such lots of fun, I forgot how hard you were working."

The exchange was made, Ziba climbing into the sled, and Thursa grasping the handle. Then the fun and noise, hoots, howls and Indian war-whoops, still went on, as they sped down the "big river" with undiminished zest and speed. Time was completely forgotten, until Thursa—though she was as vigorous as a young moose—actually gave out, crying for quarter, "I can't run another step!"

The brisk, sharp wind blowing across the river soon cooled their heat, and after a few moments of rest, they commenced their return.

They began to realize by this time how thoroughly tired they were. Thursa took the tongue, walking slowly along, while, though Ziba's hand was still on the end-board, he did little more than hang on and grumble about his fatigue.

"O my!" he panted, "but how tired I am! I feel like a run-down deer, with a painter after him!"

"You act more like a run-down lazy-mill," retorted Thursa, jerking the sled away from him. "How you hang back!"

Regaining his equilibrium with some difficulty, he remarked with a comical display of dignity, "Sister Thursa, you had better be more civil, or friend Isaac won't ride out with us again"—making a dive for the sled. "Besides you might spill him out, and lose him; then, like enough, there'd have to be another bear-funeral!"

"There's not much danger but that I shall go every time you ask me," returned Isaac, snuggling down under the bearskin robe with a comfortable sense of security. "But what about the 'bear-funeral?'"

"Why, didn't you ever hear about the Dutch Yorker's young one that the bear eat up, and the whole Albany settlement turned out to hunt the bear down, so they might make a proper funeral for the young one?"

"Well, what if they'd got the wrong bear?" asked Isaac, laughing.

"Oh—well—they had their tears and Holland gin, all the same, you know."

"Why, boys!" exclaimed Thursa, suddenly breaking in upon their nonsense, with anxious alarm in her voice, "do you see how late it is? The sun has gone down!"

"Never mind," returned Ziba, putting his hands on the end-board in good earnest, "it can't be a great way to the little river, and then we'll have the wind at our backs to help us up."

"I don't know," answered she, glancing uneasily around. "I do wish we hadn't come so far."

They moved along rapidly and in silence, each one regretting, in his way, that the fun and excitement had led them so far, though it must be said of them that they had no fears, except the fear of offending their parents by not returning at the bidden hour. They never gave a thought to the dangers lurking in the miles and miles of woods that surrounded them.

But the dangers of the woods were mindful of them in the shape of one gaunt, gray wolf that came boldly across the ice, from the opposite shore, sniffing the air in evident search of them.

There was one startled look in each of the children's faces as they caught sight of him, but not a sound escaped their lips. Only redoubled efforts to hasten homeward told of what they had seen; all, naturally, thinking that the stiller they were, the safer they would be from the wolf's attack. And so it was with *one* wolf.

Isaac raised himself, as well as he could, on his well knee, and both boys turned their faces toward the wolf, watching his actions with frightened, anxious eyes.

Thus far, this winter, the wolves had not troubled the settlement; but the snow had lain on the ground since the first of November, and the wise ones were already preparing to defend their young stock and sheep from the depredations of the wild beasts, knowing from experience that there would be a descent of starved-out wolves before the winter was over.

"Oh! Why didn't I think of this before!" cried Thursa, in a gasping whisper. "And there's sure to be more!"

The stillness for a while seemed to make the wolf uncertain, but he continued his advance in nearly a straight line from where he started until he came upon the children's track, where he took the scent—much after the manner of a hound—running with great speed and certainty for a few rods.

"O Thursa!" Isaac's frightened face was turned for a moment toward the noble girl who was making such efforts to save them, "he has found our trail, and is coming straight on!"

"Get your crutches handy," she said in sharp, decisive tones, turning her face a little, so that they might catch her words. "And, Ziba, hold on tight!"

There was no shaking in the girl's voice, yet. Though she had often heard it said that a wolf alone would not attack a man, she knew there was danger from a famished wolf, especially if the chase was long enough for the wolf to become familiar with their appearance. But the wolf, after running swiftly a short distance, with his nose to the ground to make sure of the nearness of his intended prey, sat down with his face toward the opposite shore and gave a succession of long-drawn howls, the signal that "game was started;" a signal well known and dreaded by our first settlers.

No pen can describe the sound; and yet these children knew and understood its awful meaning, and did not need the "More wolves!" that burst from the purpling lips of the overtasked girl to tell them of their impending doom!

It had seemed impossible to run any faster, but at the sound of those howls, Thursa fairly flew over the ice, not even noticing the extra weight caused by the poor frightened Ziba, who had fallen half in the sled-box, until he wailed, "O sister! I can't run another step!"

Without attempting to stay the sled, she raised the tongue with one hand and allowed the sled to run past

her. Then she caught the now almost fainting boy and lifted him into the sled-box. As she bounded to the front again, she said: "Get ready to do what I tell you —I've—I've a—plan!"

She could now see a little way ahead of them the mouth of the "little river." Her only hope lay in gaining that before the wolves should collect. As the wind was blowing up the river, there was a possible chance that their cries might be heard at the settlement; but she had taken no more than a dozen steps when Isaac cried out, "There's another wolf!"

The heavy sled with its precious load was telling upon her, but this confirmation of her worst fears renewed her flagging strength. The huge sled swayed from side to side at every step with the tremendous impetus she gave it, and her clumsy, ill-shapen, moccasin-like shoes, of which she had complained bitterly only this morning, were standing her in good stead now—even better than for the push-slide which she had enjoyed in going down in the afternoon—for every footfall told without slipping. Though the blood was surging through her veins, throbbing against her eyes, almost blinding her, and her breath came in quick hard gasps, each one an actual pain, the brave girl never once really thought of herself. The horrid picture of the two boys torn to pieces by the wolves was all that she saw! She herself seemed only some flying object of anxious, throbbing, breathless agony. "Could she save the boys?" was the question which mingled itself constantly in her mind with the little prayer, which she had said every night and morning since she could speak; and although every particle of energy of both body and mind was put into her running, she was still dimly conscious of her final plan of action, should the wolves overtake them.

She knew that more wolves must come, after the second one made his appearance, and thought she was prepared for them; but the sudden announcement, in the now almost frenzied screams from the boys, that "more wolves are coming down the bank from the

other shore—more than we can count!" made her stagger pitifully for a moment.

The controlling sense of her great duty to save the boys soon steadied her, however, and she cried out in sharp command—though a hard-drawn breath cut between each word—"Boys—stop—your—screaming!"

Though fear was fast overcoming the poor boys, they heeded her tones of command enough to speak lower; but, oh, how their voices shook as they announced the last move of the savage pack. "They're coming straight across—oh, Thursa! Thursa! The other two are coming right at us! They're all on the trail now! Oh! Oh!"

A short yelping howl announced the start. Even before Thursa could fully comprehend what the boys had said, the wolves had met on their trail and were in full pursuit.

There may be some code of honor among wolves, which demands that the first to scent game takes the lead in chasing down. In this case the big gray fellow kept the lead, the rest coming in a straggling pack close behind. For a few seconds the boys gazed spellbound at the swiftly galloping beasts, and then, no longer able to bear the sight, they huddled down into the box with smothered screams.

Thursa realized the movement, and in the silence that followed she distinctly heard the scratching patter of the approaching feet.

"Throw out something!" she gasped.

Isaac understood the words only, and the next moment she heard one of his crutches ring out on the ice.

"Not that!" she panted still louder, for she knew, as it proved, that one sniff would be all the check that the stick would give. "The bearskin!"

As the bearskin robe flew out, the wind caught it, floating it toward the shore, and in an instant the whole pack turned to pursue it, tumbling and sliding over each other in a snarling, squabbling mass.

A short respite was thus given to the children, while the wolves righted themselves and tore to pieces the

bearskin robe. It was a short pause, however, for the brave girl had barely reached the turn into the "little river," when the pack were upon them again, maddened to fury at being cheated out of a meal. The foremost wolf actually scratched the end of the box, as he sprang at it.

The sudden slewing of the sled, as Thursa dashed up the little river, sent the leader rolling over on the ice, and the unlooked-for turn left the rest of the pack sailing helplessly by on their haunches.

"Now—scream—children!" she gasped, by this time fairly out of breath. "They may—hear—you at—the settle——!"

She gave a little short, sharp scream to start them, too, to which they responded by a pitiful, sobbing call for "Mother!"

Poor little fellows! one was lame and the other was a mere child; but she could not stop to pity them, for the wolves had gathered themselves and were upon them again.

"*Scream!*" she shouted, at the same time giving the sled a powerful jerk that sent it far ahead, while stooping she snatched Isaac's remaining crutch as it shot past her, just in time to defend herself from the foremost wolf.

They did scream then, when they saw that Thursa was behind among the wolves, and their sharp young voices with all their agony of fear, were borne to the ears of approaching helpers. The settlers, headed by the two trappers, were coming in search of them.

Thursa, with the desperation born of fear, struck frantically at the wolf as he leaped at her. Though the blow was not very accurately given, it was successful. The force imparted to the heavy hardwood crutch, by the strong young arm, met the ugly beast full on his nose, doubling its weight by the violence of his savage spring.

The crutch was hurled from her hand; but the wolf was stopped, for he was rolling over and over, howling and scratching at his bruised and bleeding nose. He

was directly covered by the pack, snarling and quarreling over the scent of fresh blood.

Thursa gave but one look at them before she flew back to the sled. She thought as she caught up the tongue, with an awful agony in her heart, "What can be done to stop the wolves next time?"

She reeled, staggered and fell as she attempted to start the heavy sled, crying out with mortal anguish as she went down on her knees. It was well that help was so near, for the poor girl's strength was nearly spent! But she struggled bravely to her feet, to be rewarded by a long, loud shout from the rescuing party as they swept around the bend in full sight.

With a cry of relief she grasped the sled-tongue and hurried, with the last remnant of her strength, toward them.

"Stop there!" shouted Thursa's father, as they met and passed the men keeping on toward the advancing wolves.

She heard shots and shouts as she sank down in utter exhaustion beside the sled, and that was the last she knew till she found herself lying on the settle at home, with her mother bending over her.

"O mother!" she cried, starting up as soon as she recognized her surroundings—"The boys!—I tried so hard to save them!" she concluded with a hysterical sob.

"So you did, my noble darling!" returned her mother, clasping the sobbing girl tightly in her arms. "And when you feel better, you shall tell me all about it; but you must be quiet now."

"Our brave girl shouldn't cry now," said her father, with tears and a loving reproof in his voice, as he came forward with Ziba in his arms.

She reached out her hands, and the father stooped his tall form that the two children might kiss each other.

"They killed 'most all the wolves, Thursa," whispered Ziba eagerly. "Ten of 'em anyhow, and the trappers have stopped to skin 'em."

"And, Isaac, Ziba?"

"Oh, he's home—he's all right."

In a week Thursa was well of the lameness caused by her fearful run, and the fright, to the hardy young settler, soon became only a memory.

A few years later, she married the grandfather of the dear old lady who told me this story; and though Thursa died many years before her husband, he kept till his death the big wolf-skin robe—made of six of the ten skins—given Thursa by the trappers, as a memento of her courage.

This vivid picture of the sort of life American girls lead in Paris will be of especial interest at just this time, when hundreds of our young countrywomen are studying in that city. It is from the pen of "Jeanne Mairet," and is translated especially for ROMANCE. The author, although for many years a resident of France and long married to a prominent Frenchman, is the daughter of a distinguished American artist.

THE RIVAL PRIMA DONNAS.

THE Rue Châteaubriand, in Paris, is a winding and steep street, which is little frequented; the cabmen avoid it unless their duty compels them to drive somebody there. This street, which is a few steps from the Arch of Triumph, is as calm as a village; a little more and the grass would grow between its paving-stones. As a great many of the houses were built before this quarter of the city became as fashionable as it is now, they are modest and provincial in appearance; several of them have a small garden in front, which contains lilacs and even trees that conceal as best they can the habitations they enliven by their presence.

One of these houses, large, and perched at the top of the rise, had become a boarding-house which was frequented by foreigners and especially by Americans. It was called the Pension Magerot, after the name of the lady who kept it.

The widow Magerot had some families among her guests, but her boarders were principally young ladies who had come to Paris, not to have their dresses made by Worth, but to study seriously. These young ladies, who had travelled so far to finish their artistic education, to become painters, singers, or simply to perfect themselves in the French language, seemed to belong a little to Mme. Magerot. Their successes rejoiced her, and she sympathized with them in their disappointments. Having no daughters of her own, she adopted her boarders—until the moment when they were behind-

hand in the payment of their bills! After all, business is business.

It was a funny little society that inhabited the Pension Magerot: an active, personal and ardent society, where jealousies existed by the side of friendships, where the pupils of the great X. scorned the pupils of the renowned Z., where the rivalries of studio or of music-teachers showed themselves artlessly with comical feminine violence and passionate scratches—figuratively speaking, of course. The common tie that united all these young girls was the love of work and the firm will of succeeding. Those who were not enthusiastic over their art did not remain long; they were only amateurs, and were disdained by the others.

One day the harmony that reigned in the "hive"—this was the name given laughingly on one occasion by a boarder, and the term ever after remained—came near being compromised. This is how it happened:

Two young ladies, Lillian Sargent and Mary Hicks, had chosen as their singing-teacher the celebrated Mme. Chabriel, an incomparable artist, who for more than twenty years had delighted the frequenters of the Opera. Rich, highly respected and the mother of a family, she could not entirely give up her art, and her greatest happiness was in forming pupils after her manner, and teaching them her celebrated method. Only, she rigorously refused every pupil who had not a high ambition; the richest amateurs knocked in vain at her door.

Among the young ladies whom Mme. Chabriel had taught were many Americans, and some of their crystal voices have resounded upon the French stage. The two best pupils of Mme. Chabriel were, without any doubt, Miss Lillian Sargent and Miss Mary Hicks. Mary had the more voice of the two, and yet, at the musical party given by Mme. Chabriel at the end of the season, Lillian, and not Mary, was invited to sing. To sing at one of Mme. Chabriel's entertainments was an honor often sought, but rarely obtained. When, by chance, the teacher brought forward one of her pupils,

it was certain that this pupil was already an artist. Now Lillian had sung at Mme. Chabriel's; she had even obtained a great success with this chosen public.

Miss Hicks's mother and Mme. Magerot were very good friends, and the indignant mother poured out her sorrow to the Parisian landlady:

"To choose Lillian Sargent, with her slender voice, instead of Mary! There was some intrigue at the bottom of it; otherwise how can you explain such a thing? Each time that my daughter has not had the success we expected, there was a cabal, for, as I have already told you, Mary is not like other pupils; she is a real artist; she has always known how to sing; she has a phenomenal voice! Phenomenal, you understand! When she was sixteen, she already gave concerts, and crowds fought at the door to hear her. Upon one occasion, in the West, there was a real row because there were no longer any tickets for the concert. A row in honor of my daughter! Wasn't that enough to make me proud? When Mary told me that she wanted to leave her family, her country and all the money she was earning to go to Paris and take lessons, I opened my eyes. 'Mary Hicks!' I said to her, 'you don't think of such a thing! You ought to give lessons, instead of receiving them!' But my daughter is very obstinate. So I abandoned everything to accompany her. And to see that they don't know how to appreciate her here is enough to make me go wild! I feel like telling that old singer what I think of her! She is jealous of my Mary. Ah, if Mary would only listen to me, we should start off by next Saturday's steamer!"

"Don't do that, my good Mrs. Hicks," said Mme. Magerot, who did not relish the idea of losing two boarders at one fell swoop. "Remember that the manager of the Opéra-Comique has promised to give Miss Mary a hearing. He will know how to appreciate her."

If Mary Hicks did not shout her indignation from the house-tops, she was none the less exasperated for all that. She also recalled her former successes. If

she was intelligent enough to comprehend that possessing a fine voice is only the beginning for an artist, she nevertheless prized this fine voice highly. On arriving at Paris with good letters of introduction she did not wish to decide upon a teacher hurriedly; the choice of a professor is a serious matter. She did not doubt for a moment that, if all of them could hear her, they would dispute among themselves for the honor of giving her lessons. She gave up the idea of this kind of competition and called upon the most celebrated teachers. Finally she selected Mme. Chabriel. Mrs. Hicks could not get over the choice made by her daughter. Mme. Chabriel had calmly listened to Mary's quavers. Watching the teacher closely, Mrs. Hicks was unable to detect the least sign of emotion on her face. After having listened attentively, Mme. Chabriel said to the young girl:

"You have a voice, mademoiselle, a great deal of voice, even; but you do not know anything about singing. Or, rather, what is still more important, you must unlearn before I can teach you anything. If you will consent to obey me blindly, to forget that you have ever sung in public and to work seriously, I will agree to make an artist of you in a year or two."

And thus, Mary had become a model pupil. Nothing disheartened her, and she made rapid progress. She already dreamed of the day when she would be applauded in the Old World, as well as in the New. So, when their teacher chose Lillian instead of her to sing at the musical party, she had a moment of violent revolt and was in bad temper for a whole week. She even thought of quitting Mme. Chabriel. However, she did nothing of the kind, for she knew how, when it was absolutely necessary, to control her feelings. But her friendly sentiments toward Lillian Sargent were extinguished by this blow. Discord soon reigned in the "hive;" there was a Sargent party and a Hicks party. The Hicks group was the aggressive one, violent, extreme left, *intransigeant*, even; the Sargent party was calm in comparison—it was scarcely centre left. Accord-

ing to Mrs. Hicks, Lillian Sargent was an enigma; Mrs. Hicks was partial to enigmas, but only on condition of being able to solve them. Now the Lillian enigma was not to be solved.

"First of all," said this amiable lady to her confidante, "where does she come from? What does she want? She never speaks of her family, of her past or of her future. Is she poor or well off? Does she intend to go upon the stage or does she not? She never replies to questions, and I do not hesitate to admit that I ask questions; that's the best way of finding out what you want to know. She turns off everything with a joke, or looks at you with an astonished air that chills you. You will never get it out of my head that she has some secret to conceal. Then, birds of a feather, you know, flock together. She has chosen for her intimate friend that ugly creature, Jane Forbes, when she might have become attached to Mary. My daughter is so good and sociable! It is she who made the first advances. Ah, she has been well paid for her kindness! But if Miss Sargent should get down on her knees now and implore Mary's friendship, it would be of no avail!"

Happily for her, Lillian did not come to such an extremity. She seemed serenely unconscious of the trouble that her modest success had occasioned; she noticed that Mary sulked, but as Miss Hicks's sulking was entirely indifferent to her, she pretended not to see it. At table the two pupils had sat together for several months, and as they pursued the same studies, there naturally existed between them a certain superficial intimacy. Mary Hicks now changed her place to the other side of the table, but as this change gave Lillian as neighbor that "ugly creature," Jane Forbes, she made no complaint. In talking with Jane she did not even appear to comprehend that Mrs. Hicks, her daughter and their friends had placed her, as it were, in quarantine.

In spite of Mrs. Hicks's insinuations, Lillian Sargent was in no wise a mysterious person. She was a young lady of twenty-two, good-looking without being really

pretty, with a distinguished air, graceful manner and charming smile. Although always very simply dressed, the cut of her garments and her way of wearing them denoted that she was accustomed to good society. A hard worker and a docile pupil, Mme. Chabriel was proud of her; if the young girl had not a "phenomenal" voice, she had at least taken some very good lessons before coming to Paris; she was not obliged, as the teacher expressed it, to "reverse the machine," and none of the pupils had known how to profit so well by her method and advice. Lillian was not contented with singing; she took piano, French and Italian lessons, and spoke French correctly. Her days were so occupied that she had no time to think about the gossip of the "hive."

If Lillian's passion for her art was real and absorbing, this passion was only child's play when compared with Jane Forbes's love for hers. Jane was a pupil at Julian's studio; she already painted pictures and dreamed of glory. During the past four years she had lived in the cheapest garret chamber in Mme. Magerot's house. Always dressed in black and as economically as possible, she was, still, very neat about her person. You felt that she was atrociously poor, but she never made Mme. Magerot wait for the board-bill. No one ever dared to speak of poverty in her presence; her little eyes sparkled with such a hard, proud and even threatening look that the conversation was soon changed.

Jane was very homely. Her face was so flat that you could not help thinking when looking at her that her nurse must, by accident, have sat upon her visage; the forehead was strongly developed, the chin enormous and protruding, so much so that her little eyes and funny nose almost disappeared. A homely woman generally suffers on account of her ugliness; Jane Forbes, on the contrary, was entirely indifferent to her looks. At twenty-five she had not had the least flirtation, and considered marriage as a social necessity from which superior natures ought to free themselves; she had always looked upon herself as one of these superior

natures. She divided men into two categories: the artists, who interested her as professors, as people who could be studied and turned to account—there was a motive for their existence; as for the others, those who could not handle a brush or a roughing-chisel, she scorned them—they had no reason for existing.

Jane Forbes came from the interior of Maine, and it was a puzzle to explain how the love of art had germinated in the heart of this Puritan daughter, lost in a little village where pictures were surely not abundant and where artists were considered as useless individuals. However, the love of art had bubbled in the heart of this silent girl with something of the rude energy of the country; she set about making her drawings, sketches and pictures with the same violence and intensity of will that her ancestors had shown in clearing the land and repulsing the Indians.

Jane hoped, despaired and struggled, she felt her heart beat when her master stopped before her work, corrected, blamed or praised. For a long while she had been lost in the crowd of pupils about her. The others, surrounded since their infancy by works of art, visiting museums and exhibitions and having drawing teachers, possessed an enormous advantage over the poor stranger. Jane was never discouraged, however, even when she wept with despair, alone in her garret chamber; the following day she worked a little harder, that was all. Solitary, even among the young boarders, she never said anything about her work, nor took any one into her confidence. She was looked upon as a "dig," who would probably never amount to anything. Then, little by little, her professors, seeing her ardor and desire to do well, the intelligence that shone at the bottom of her little gray eyes, so bright and handsome by their expression in the middle of her ugly face, took a greater interest in her. A little encouragement rendered her perfectly happy! The first difficulties at last overcome and the rebel hand suppled, she showed herself original and bold in her way of seeing the model; her abrupt drawing was not everybody's draw-

ing; beneath her awkwardness you felt something resembling real talent. Then she made prodigious progress, and was soon classed among the strongest pupils, those who would be artists to-morrow. But her apprenticeship had lasted four years.

Only one of the young ladies at the "hive" had succeeded in slightly softening Jane Forbes's wild nature. Upon her arrival at the Pension Magerot, Lillian had comprehended all the concentrated passion, intelligence and frenzied ambition concealed beneath Jane's impassibility. By tact and gentleness she had become almost a friend to this girl who asked for no friendship in life. The contrasts of their character attracted them toward each other. Jane sometimes deigned to talk with Lillian; she even ended by telling her about her studio life, by rejoicing over her triumphs, by bemoaning a failure. She was astonished at experiencing some pleasure in these effusions. It is true that Jane justified this feebleness in her own eyes by persuading herself that she was useful to Lillian, whose nature was too soft and who needed to be constantly "redressed." Miss Forbes understood very well a certain kind of redressal, which consisted in an absolute and inflexible frankness of speech, never seeking to attenuate hard but salutary truths. It is only just to add that, severe for others, she was not at all tender toward herself.

When Mme. Chabriel selected Lillian among all her pupils to sing at the musical entertainment, Jane was very happy. To say that at the bottom of this contentment there was not a little malicious joy at the disappointment of Mary Hicks and her mother would be showing an entire misconception of human nature; but the pleasure caused by the triumph of her friend greatly exceeded the malicious joy. Since that day, however, Jane had become slightly anxious. Lillian worked less; under pretext that some friends had arrived at Paris, she dressed with more care and went out oftener than usual; sometimes she appeared dreamy,

and even sad. Bad symptoms! When people work as they ought to work, they never have any time for revery. Jane felt that it was her duty to "speak a few truths" to her friend, and she was not a person to hesitate in the presence of such a duty. One day when Lillian returned home dressed in a black silk dress—a silk dress!—Jane looked at her seriously and followed her to her chamber.

"Do you know, Lillian, that I am very anxious about you?"

"I don't need to look at your black eye-brows, frowning in such a threatening manner, to divine your anxiety, my dear Jane. Allow me to take off my hat while listening to your sermon; for it's a sermon that you are going to deliver, isn't it?"

"You know that I never joke and that I do not understand other persons' jokes. I love you enough to be frank with you, that's all. You have not studied for the past two days, and you missed your Italian lesson this afternoon in order to go, I don't know where nor with whom."

"Simply to the Louvre—not the museum—with one of my cousins who came from New York a few days ago. I am tired and in bad humor; I should prefer to row in the galleys, if there were still any galleys, rather than again begin the drudgery of spending an afternoon in a dry goods store. And now, to add to my discomfort, you look at me with hard and threatening eyes. Ah, if you think that I should not have preferred the most irregular verbs of the Italian language, you make a mistake!"

Jane could not help smiling, but when she had something to say, she said it; nothing turned her from her purpose.

"Well, why did you go? You ought to know what to expect from such excursions. I am sure that this cousin is the same person who asked you to buy boots at ten dollars, silk at four dollars a yard and who very calmly wrote you by the next mail that she had

changed her mind and didn't want any of the articles. You kept the boots, which were not your size, and the silk still lies at the bottom of your trunk."

"That's true, Jane."

"Then why don't you have a little will? Why not say no once for all?"

"Why, why? First of all because I am feeble; then, because I love my cousin, who is adorably pretty and wheedling; then, above all, because I am an orphan, have neither brother nor sister, and Minnie is of the same blood. The family tie is something, after all."

"I believe that I have exposed my theories more than once on this subject. There are a great many prejudices in the world, of which we must rid ourselves if we wish to be really strong; and among these prejudices I unhesitatingly place the family. I quite understand that a person should love his father and mother, if they are worthy of being loved and if this affection does not hinder one's life-work. But because there is a little of your blood in the veins of some person or other who has neither your education nor any of your tastes, that you should be obliged to give him your affection, or what is more, your time, never! I go still further: I believe in friendship freely felt, freely provoked; I believe in the affinity of souls more than in the affinity of bodies. For example, I should hold more to the affection of a companion like you, whom I have studied and chosen among many, than to the affection of a sister who was only a society girl and who would end by marrying a grocer!"

"My dear Jane!"

"Yes, yes, you believe that with your winning smile and caressing eyes you will turn me aside from what you call my sermon! But you won't escape it. Lillian, I am not satisfied with you. You have changed within a short time; you have changed since the musical party at Mme. Chabriel's. You work without any ardor or conviction; then at times you are sad, and the sadness of a young girl is an unhealthy symptom. Lillian!" and Jane got up, terrible and threatening—

"Lillian Sargent, swear to me that there is not a man in the case, that a masculine compliment has not turned your head. Man, I tell you, is the enemy!"

The energy, scorn and disgust that Jane Forbes put into the word "man" made her friend burst into laughter.

"Don't be alarmed, my dear Jane. I give you my word of honor that during the whole of the evening I remained hedged between two beautiful ladies whom I did not know—which, by the way, was not amusing—that I sang only at the end of the evening, and that among the compliments I received the only one that gave me real pleasure was the one paid by Mme. Chabriel. Here it is: 'It wasn't really too bad, my little Lillian!'"

"Then?"

"Then?"

Lillian arose and went to the open window, for the weather was mild, and the joyous spring, prematurely arrived, made her almost forget that the winter was scarcely over. After a moment's silence Lillian continued:

"Then, Jane, I comprehended—at the very moment when I sang 'not too badly,' and knew very well that before that picked audience I had a success—I comprehended that Mary Hicks was not mistaken when she overwhelmed me with the scornful name of 'amateur.' I had hoped that my voice could gain compass and force; I know now that it will not. Amateur I am, and amateur I shall remain. I have a good parlor voice, cultivated more than most parlor voices, but it would not go beyond the footlights. Amateur, I tell you. I felt it myself; then I consulted Mme. Chabriel. She has the same opinion. So you see that a day spent at the Louvre has not the terrible importance you attach to this misdeed. I shall be a woman like the rest, that's all. The world will continue to turn all the same, I assure you."

Jane was thunderstruck by this revelation. She asked herself how she should resist the shock if some

one should suddenly tell her that she was destined to make pretty little water-colors, good for Christmas presents to her friends, instead of painting serious pictures, which would be exhibited—and bought; and she compared the sentiments that she should experience in such an unlikely case to Lillian's feelings at the present moment. Her eyes were moist for an instant, and she cried:

"My poor, dear friend!"

There was a short silence, a contemplation, as it were, beside a coffin: the dead was a vanished hope. It was Lillian who first broke the silence.

"What will you, Jane? we must know how to be resigned; I shall never be only a parlor artist, but I shall be an artist."

"Yes," cried Jane, passionately, "much more than the brawlers with 'phenomenal voices,' in honor of whom the crowd raises riots!"

Lillian laughed heartily.

"Admit that the despite at not seeing me tear the laurels from my rival's brow is one of the strongest reasons for your sympathy."

"There is a little of that, but only a very little. You must suffer a great deal, Lillian?"

"Much less than you would in my place; a great deal less than I should have suffered a year ago. When we see things at a distance, they appear radiant and superb, as in the apotheosis of a fairy piece. I then thought only of the happiness of freely singing in a theatre, accompanied by a splendid orchestra, surrounded by beautiful scenery and real artists. That was a dream, a fixed idea; the ordinary happiness of a woman frightened me. God forgive me! I believed that I was above happiness!"

"And you were right!"

"Who knows? Well, since I have seen things closer and talked freely with Mme. Chabriel, who has treated me as a friend; since she has told me about her difficult beginnings, the mortifications even of the celebrated and envied prima donna, the jealousy of her comrades,

the treachery that an artist must always beware of, I comprehend that the reverse side of the medal is unclean and ugly."

"What do you intend to do?"

"I don't know."

"But you must not allow yourself to be discouraged. You must react."

"There's no use in struggling against nature; nature laughs at revolts."

"But you can sing in concerts and churches and take pupils! For, in fine, you must earn your living. mustn't you? Do you intend to remain in Paris?'

"Not a great while; until the end of summer, perhaps."

Lillian hesitated a little, as though she had still something more to say; but Jane, being very much preoccupied, did not notice this hesitation. All at once she said abruptly:

"I also have some news to tell you: I'm received."

"Received?"

"Why, yes, at the Salon of the Champs-Elysées; my picture——"

"O Jane, I'm so happy! And you let me prattle without telling me at once!"

"There's another thing: I'm going to quit the house. I've hired a studio and intend to move into it to-morrow. A studio at last!"

There was such a ray of happiness on the face of the "ugly creature" that she appeared almost pretty. It was easy to see that the waiting had been hard and cruel; the success was all the more glorious.

"I shall be very sorry to lose you, Jane; you are my only friend here. You are too happy to think of those whom you leave behind."

Jane appeared to reflect.

"You are partly right. I have never listened much to my heart; I believe that it is very small and very hard. I have only one passion, one happiness, one dream: my art. But I love you dearly, Lillian, in spite of all."

"I will go and see you."

Jane did not reply at once; she blushed, then finally said:

"Come only when you receive word from me. I am going to be more occupied than ever, and work is sacred. I hope that you will also work, for, Lillian, that is the only good thing in life."

Lillian understood perfectly well what was beneath all this apparent severity. She had discovered in this proud girl, who concealed her misery, some signs that did not deceive her. Jane must have nearly exhausted her slender resources.

"There is no use in your trying not to want my affection, Jane. It is yours already, and you cannot help yourself. So, I warn you, if I have a favor to ask —a delicate favor that I can only ask from one whom I love—I shall call upon you without hesitation. Swear that you will do the same by me if the opportunity occurs."

Jane turned about quickly at the moment of quitting her friend, and said with a deep frown:

"That means: 'Jane, if you are obliged to ask for charity, you must hold out your hand to me.' No, never! If I am to succeed, I must owe my success to myself alone; if I am not to succeed, the quicker I die of hunger in my corner the better it will be."

Lillian felt the tears come to her eyes.

"You make me feel very sad, Jane."

Jane hesitated; then, with her usual abruptness, she jumped toward her friend and kissed her repeatedly; and then she ran away without saying a word.

Lillian set to work with as much ardor as though she, like Mary Hicks, expected to make her début at the Opéra-Comique. No one divined that she had given up her vast ambition. She wished at least to profit by the few months that remained before her departure.

Jane had left the boarding house, and no one heard anything about her. It was not until ten days after the opening of the Salon that Lillian decided one

morning to visit the exhibition of paintings. She had run over the first accounts of the opening to discover her friend's name, but in vain. When she reached the Salon, she sought for Jane's picture a long time without finding it. At last she discovered it, skyed and in a bad light; it was irremediably lost. Lillian sat down upon one of the seats, heartbroken. She thought she saw in the distance the unhappy Jane, so pale and sad that she excited pity. Then, as she got up to go and meet her, Lillian persuaded herself that her imagination alone had evoked this image, for she saw no trace of her friend in any of the rooms, which at this early hour were not at all crowded. She returned to her seat and looked for a long while at this picture so highly perched.

Lillian recalled to herself Jane's feverish work while she was painting this picture. A friend at Julian's had loaned Jane a corner of her studio to work in. Lillian now saw the picture itself for the first time; but Jane had shown her the studies made in the open air, with an admirable indifference for the astonishment she provoked. There was a movement of a head, the attitude of a child, a group surprised—the whole indicated by some clever strokes of the pencil. And Jane had described the picture to her, explaining how these sketches made in the street would help her. Lillian seemed to hear her friend's voice, to see her animated gestures, the extraordinary brilliancy of her little gray eyes, wherein she could read such depths of passion. And this was how the dream of a whole year had ended!

And yet, this picture was remarkable, full of life and truth. The scene represented was a familiar and simple one: an organ-grinder under the dusty trees of the outer boulevard, while a group of street urchins listened to the music and watched with rapture the puppets that danced by machinery. The little urchins were proudly perched, well observed, correctly drawn and in nowise embellished; they were the real, popular types of the little street arab. The painting was

clear, a little too white, perhaps. The influence of Bastien-Lepage, for whom the young artist professed a profound admiration, was a little too evident; but, in spite of that, the picture had a personal stamp.

Lillian soon felt that she was not alone. She turned around suddenly and saw standing beside her a young man, who looked at her intently. She blushed and held out her hand.

"Why, it's you, John!"

"Yes, Lillian; the year was finished two days ago. I wanted to arrive on the 8th, but I should have been obliged to take another steamer and wait at Paris before daring to call upon you. That would have seemed too hard. They told me at the house that I would find you here, and so I came."

All this was said with a mixture of timidity and firmness that was very curious. Lillian, after having blushed a little, became calm. John, holding his hat in his hand, was more embarrassed, but he made no gestures. Lillian's friend was a strong young fellow, well built for the struggle for life; he was not handsome, but there was so much kindness expressed in his blue eyes that you felt attracted toward him as you are always drawn toward a force that knows how to be gentle when the occasion requires it. At last, as Lillian said nothing, John continued, with a slight trembling in his voice:

"I'm not welcome?"

Lillian looked at him smilingly and said: "You are very welcome, John; I expected you."

Then, as she wished to cut short a phrase that she divined in advance, she said to him:

"What do you think of that picture up there?"

John, who was near-sighted, put on his eye-glasses, looked at the picture and said candidly:

"I think it's ugly."

"Do me a great pleasure: buy it."

"Certainly; but if you gave me the choice, I should prefer a prettier picture, one a little more pink and white—that one there, for example, which shows us

something smiling and pleasant to the eye: a young girl among flowers. Those boys, on the contrary, are not pretty. I can go into the street and see an organ-player and some urchins, while I am obliged to hunt a long time before finding a pretty face surrounded by roses."

"As soon as you have bought it, you can do as you like with it."

Then Lillian recounted the history of her friend and what she divined of her present situation.

"But I'll buy two of her ugly pictures, three, as many as you wish, Lillian, since that gives you pleasure, and your beautiful eyes shine through your tears. How good you are! Let us go at once. I have my check-book with me."

Lillian laughed.

"Not so quickly, not so quickly! Jane must not suspect that I had anything to do with the affair. We will go to a picture dealer, and you will take another name for the moment, as Sherwood is——"

"Is to become your own. When? Soon, I hope. I have not tormented you during the past twelve months, which seemed never to finish! You are right, Lillian; that picture is very good; I don't know where I had my eyes. I love you so much, Lillian, that I am a little crazy!"

He told the truth; he did love her, and sufficiently well to understand a fancy that would have discouraged others. Lillian Sargent, orphan, well-off, if not very rich, loved by an honorable man, had a great passion for music. Restive at the ordinary life of a worldly young lady, impatient at the restraints of society, from which she could not escape, not knowing exactly whether she loved John Sherwood well enough to become his wife, dreaming vaguely of the theatre without avowing her dream, she had asked for an entire year before giving a definite response. John had accepted this condition, and now the time of trial had passed. He was radiant.

The following day Lillian ran to the Rue Notre-Dame-des-Champs. The door-porter shook her head.

The American artist was ill, she thought, but would not allow any one to enter her studio; it was really becoming alarming; in fine, if Lillian wished to try, she was free to do so.

Lillian went rapidly up the five flights. Since Jane had quitted the boarding-house the two young ladies had not met each other. Lillian had come once without succeeding in seeing her friend; she had written, but received no other reply than this: "When I have something interesting to say to you, I will write you. I have no time to lose, and you ought not to have any to lose yourself. But you have never understood the real value of an hour. It is easy to see that work has not always been the unique rule of your life." And that was all.

Lillian knocked, then knocked louder. There was no response. But she belonged to a race that is not easily discouraged. She said in a strong voice:

"Jane, I know that you are there; moreover, the people in the house are becoming alarmed. If you do not open the door of your own accord, I shall be obliged to call the police-commissioner, explain the case, say that you are thought to be ill, dying, perhaps, and have him send for a locksmith. You don't wish me to take such extreme measures."

Lillian's little discourse produced its effect. There was a noise in the studio, and the door opened. Without saying a word after having opened the door, Jane dragged herself to a sofa and fell upon it. She was horribly pale, and evidently very ill. Lillian, very much alarmed, kneeled down beside her and kissed her.

"Jane, my little Jane, why do you say nothing? Don't you want me to love you and save you from yourself?"

"I want to be left alone, to die in peace. Why do you interfere? I cannot live without a little hope, and I no longer have any hope; but death comes very slowly."

"Because your picture is badly hung? But another time you will be better appreciated. A talent like yours always ends in forcing attention."

The unhappy girl burst into a dismal laugh.

"Another time? Next year? Listen, Lillian, for I am going to avow to you what I have never avowed to another person, and I tell you now because it is too late for you to do anything for me. When I left home, I sold the little I possessed—that is to say almost nothing. With the money realized by the sale I came to Paris; I believed that the amount would be sufficient until the moment when I should have learned enough of art to live by it; my apprenticeship has lasted longer than I thought it would, but I was lucky enough to get some copies to make; the copies were paid for, but no new order given. I was not alarmed, for I still had enough money to pay for one quarter's rent of my studio, my picture was accepted at the salon. If the painting were sold, I was saved; if it did not sell, I had nothing else to do than to die in my corner. You have seen how they skyed it. That finishes it. I have not a dollar left and am very ill. You see that you arrive too late, and that I shall not have the humiliation of accepting your charity; it has become useless."

"No, I have not come too late, and I will save you, in spite of yourself! If you have no pity for yourself, my poor Jane, I have pity for you and love you. Allow yourself to be loved a little; weep with me."

Jane looked at the young girl, whose tears ran and who caressed her as a mother caresses a sick child; she seemed more astonished than touched

"How curious! Then you really love me? Why? All the same, it's good to no longer be alone. I thought I was stronger. I was afraid, positively afraid; once I was on the point of calling for aid, but happily I did not do so. You are good, Lillian; I was wrong, perhaps, not to seek a little affection in life. But you see, I thought that I was incapable of inspiring any affection, of even feeling any. I am homely, awkward and rude, as rude as our home climate; but I am not bad at heart, and I am very thankful to you. You have wept over me, and that has done me good. I feel much better."

There was a knock at the door. Jane, very much

astonished, did not wish to open it, but Lillian, without listening to her friend, went to the door. A man of about forty, very well dressed, looked, not without visible astonishment, at the empty and dreary studio, where the few pieces of furniture, the easel and some canvases seemed lost in the vast room.

"Mademoiselle Jane Forbes?"

"She is here, monsieur, but unwell."

"I have only a word to say to her."

He entered the studio and bowed to the young artist, who, too feeble to rise, beckoned him to be seated.

"Mademoiselle, you are, if I mistake not, the author of the picture numbered 639?"

"Yes, monsieur."

"Are you willing to sell it?"

Jane raised herself up, then fell back, white with emotion. She said, however:

"I should be happy to find a purchaser."

"Well, mademoiselle, I represent the firm of Viroy & Co. and we have received an order to buy your picture for the price of six hundred dollars. Naturally, we shall expect the usual commission. The purchaser, Mr. Algernon Brown, of New York, stipulates, however, one condition."

"Which is?"

"He wants another picture of the same size, which he wishes to have delivered not later than six months hence. He desires, while leaving you free to choose the subject, that the new picture shall represent a rural scene. The price is to be the same as for your street-picture. Do you accept the offer?"

"Yes, I accept."

"Then, mademoiselle, I have only to pay you the amount. Will you kindly verify this account?"

The matter was finished in five minutes. The gold-pieces and bank-bills were placed upon the table and the well-dressed gentleman disappeared.

The two young girls seemed to be equally astonished. Then Jane burst into sobs and threw herself into her friend's arms.

"Saved! I am saved! O, Lillian, how I love you, how I love you! At last! at last!"

It is not everything to put a person in social quarantine. If the person thus punished does not seem to trouble herself about it, what is the good of the quarantine?

Mrs. Hicks and her charming daughter were furious at Lillian Sargent's serenity. Besides, it was more and more evident that Miss Sargent had renounced the quasi-monastic life that she had led for the past year at the Rue Châteaubriand. She paid more attention to her toilette, went out a good deal, and even undertook a few excursions in the vicinity of Paris with some kinsfolk who were staying at the Hotel Continental,—"so she says," insinuated Mrs. Hicks, with an incredulous and disdainful air.

The manager of the Opéra-Comique did not seem to be in any hurry to give Miss Hicks a hearing, his company was full, he said, and she must wait until there was a vacancy. Mary had, however, in her turn, sung at one of Mme. Chabriel's musical entertainments, and succeeded. Her fine voice, if it was not yet completely disciplined, had gained a flexibility and sweetness unknown at the time of her entering Mme. Chabriel's class. Moreover, Mary was a handsome girl, tall, well-made and very blonde, and was sure to make a good appearance on the stage. So, as the hour of triumph approached—a triumph about which she had not the slightest doubt—she became more and more arrogant. The hesitations of the French manager astonished and exasperated her. She laid all the blame on Mme. Chabriel, who had never known how to appreciate her, and who, without doubt, had never spoken of the matter to her friend the manager, as she ought to have done. The teacher's predilection had always been for that lean Lillian Sargent!

At last, Mary Hicks came into the boarding-house dining-room one evening just as everybody was about leaving. She held her head high and went straight to

her rival, to whom she had not spoken for the past two months. There was a silence, and the boarders grouped themselves around the two young ladies.

"I have come to ask for your congratulations, Lillian Sargent; as we have studied together and for the same end, they will be more precious than all the others."

"I am willing to congratulate you, Mary, but for what event?"

Lillian smiled in looking at her companion. If Mary had counted upon seeing her turn pale with envy, she must have been undeceived, for Lillian did not show the least sign of astonishment at being thus addressed after such a long silence.

"An American manager," said Miss Hicks, loud enough to be heard by everybody, "has just offered me a superb engagement to sing the leading *rôles* in New York, and I have accepted the offer."

"I am very happy to hear it," replied Lillian, and she very cordially kissed her enemy.

Mrs. Hicks murmured aloud: "The Serpent!"

Mary was at once surrounded and congratulated; but she broke away and again addressed Lillian:

"If it would be agreeable to you, perhaps I could arrange an engagement for you; the company is not yet full. And as the manager must always foresee the case where the prima donna may be ill—we take cold so easily in our climate, you know—if you like——"

"To act as your substitute?" said Lillian.

"The word is not kind; but as the first place is filled——"

"Thank you, my dear Mary, I do not think that I will ask for your recommendation to your manager."

"Perhaps," said Mary, raising her voice, "you have an engagement of your own? I met you the other day with a companion who appeared to listen with special attention to what you said to him."

Lillian looked up; the boarders had suddenly become significantly silent. She cast a proud glance about her. Mary had evidently told her discovery to her friends. Lillian smiled, then calmly said:

"You oblige me to announce a little prematurely what I wished to still keep a secret, as I am not to be married for a month. You are right, Mary. I am destined to be only a passable amateur, instead of a great artist. But, at least, my studies will not have been lost, since they enable me to appreciate real talent in others."

"Congratulations for congratulations! cried Mary, kissing her companion in her turn.

As Lillian would no longer be a rival and as she was to marry a man who seemed to be rich, Mary concluded that it would be well to have a little tact. She made a knowing sign to her mother, who joined her felicitations to those of the daughter, though with bad grace.

"My dear Mary," said Lillian, "I have a favor to ask of you."

"You wish, then, to give me great pleasure?"

"You will be in New York in the autumn, and so shall I. I have sent orders to my architect, who is arranging a small theatre in our house. Mr. Sherwood and I intend to send out invitations for a grand entertainment, where we shall meet our friends for the first time after our marriage—for the wedding is to take place here, very simply. In order that our entertainment may be entirely successful, we need the charm of your beautiful voice——"

This finished Mary Hicks's enmity. She suddenly felt great respect for this companion who gave orders to her architect. The mother and daughter talked about the affair for a long while. Mrs. Hicks could not get over it.

"Was it possible to guess such a thing? She ought not to deceive people like that! First of all, when a girl is rich, she ought not to try and take bread from the mouths of the poor. It's true, she didn't succeed! Ah, the sly thing"!

"Which doesn't alter the fact," said Mary with a sigh, "that a rich husband in the way of a manager is not to be disdained."

"A husband! Bah! When Mary Hicks wishes to

choose a husband among the millionaires who applaud her, she can find ten."

"One good one is enough for me," said Mary, laughing.

The following day Lillian Sargent quitted the Pension Magerot, and went to live at the Hotel Continental with her pretty cousin Mrs. Vauryck, who was busily occupied with the bridal outfit. Mme. Magerot wept, and the boarders were all affected, Mary Hicks more than the others.

Lillian related the scene to John Sherwood.

"It was hard for you to admit that you gave up your great ambition to become a wife, like all the others," he said to her.

"Not at all. I am too happy to think about my past vanity. There is only Jane Forbes, who has delivered me a sermon; she refuses to make your acquaintance; she would prefer to see me run after engagements or lessons in New York than to descend to marriage. I have never dared to tell her that even without becoming your wife I could live without giving lessons. If the fact of owning a house in New York has gained me the good graces of Mrs. Hicks and her daughter, the same fact would risk making me fall very low in Jane's opinion; she considers that money which is not earned dishonors one. And yet, her sermon was less severe than it would have been three months ago. She is so happy, there in the open country, working like a beaver for fear that she will not finish the picture for Mr. Algernon Brown on the appointed day! She is in good health, is very happy and loves me sincerely, and that, thanks to you, my dear John."

"Ah, that lucky picture of those frightful urchins! Admit that it is only since the day when I bought it that you were happy to become my wife."

"That's true, for on that day I understood how good you really were. And kindness, John, is still the divinest thing in the world."

"More divine than genius?"

"Yes, more divine than genius."

This little sketch by Paul Hervieu, which has been translated from the French for ROMANCE by Elizabeth Elliot, contains a capital prescription for nervous prostration.

RIRI.

SOME years ago, as a result of divers circumstances, I was for some months afflicted with a nervous affection which rendered me morose, irritable and morbidly sensitive to the least annoyances. To receive an invitation to dinner, to exchange visits, to dispute the price of a purchase, to do any one of a thousand other trifling acts of daily life, seemed to me a monstrous undertaking. In this condition, one can fancy what serious proportions the idea of a railroad journey would assume in my eyes. Nevertheless, my medical orders compelled me to leave Paris for a while, and I resolved to try once more a little Normandy retreat on the coast, the quiet and rustic charm of which I had formerly enjoyed.

On a fine afternoon in September I reached the Western station, fifteen minutes before the departure of the 6:30 express.

I immediately sought to discover an empty compartment, and took possession of it with that savage desire for solitude which the atmosphere of the railway station seems to inspire in the breasts of even the most sociable people.

Then with my elbow on the window-sill, in the fierce apprehension of fresh arrivals, I anxiously watched the slow advance of the guard on his round.

I began to hope after he had punched my ticket. I heard resound through the station the successive bangs of the various doors which the employees slammed with that superfluous force which is their habit, and which always seems to me inexplicable, unless the company pays extra for it.

I perceived no belated traveller on the horizon. I began to breathe more freely. The conductor raised his whistle to his lips. I imitated the gesture, but with a cigar carefully lighted. I was delivered. I had five good hours of tranquillity before me, to take my ease without being irritated or rubbed the wrong way.

Suddenly, at the very last second, a veritable phalanx rushed out upon the platform.

I trembled with one of those presentiments which rarely deceive.

There were seven in this party, of assorted sexes, with more than twenty bundles, of which one was a baby. They advanced in a solid mass, urging one another to haste.

"Here are seven places," said the guard. "This way, quick! Jump in!" And in the wink of an eye my compartment became the prey of these noisy invaders; my cigar, barely touched, was sacrificed, and my feet were repeatedly trampled upon by a stout woman, who grumbled, "Phew! how it smells of tobacco!"

The engine had been under way for a long time, while they still deliberated, all standing, on the distribution of the seats forward or backward.

I detested them already. Their fragmentary talk deafened me.

"Have you got the little valise? Good! good!"

"And my big red bag? Oh! heavens——"

"But yes! I tell you I see it!"

"Where? Where? Oh! yes——"

"And the hammock?"

"I feel it in my pocket."

"I only hope the bathtub has not been forgotten! That would be a pretty go!"

"Haven't I worn myself out telling you it was in the bed, with the baby-carriage?"

It was an endless commotion. I was losing my reason.

Nevertheless, compelled to scrutinize these intruders, I amused myself with surmising that they formed three generations of one family, the last generation consisting of a youngster of about three, who, in the corner

diagonally opposite mine, prattled incessantly on the lap of his nurse. At his side, mounting guard, was his mother, a fat pudding of a woman, with wide white eyes and cheeks red and shining as apples. Opposite her was the long, pale, bearded face of the father.

The grandparents on both sides, planted at my left and opposite to me, stared at me with a kind of hostility, seeming to form a rampart thrown out for the defense of their grandson.

Ah! their grandson! In order to be all ready to satisfy his most capricious and most contradictory appetite, one of his grandmothers produced, with an evil ostentation, a curious heap of objects. But what aroused most my latent rage was the continual chattering of the entire family in the most idiotic form of baby-talk.

"G'anpy's pitty ittie Riri dinkie mikkie?"

Yes, I still see distinctly the features of that one of the grandfathers who articulated this imbecility, with such elaborate care that I had a furious desire to expedite him by rattling his false teeth together like a pair of castanets.

It will perhaps be thought that I am exaggerating. But, even at this distance, I can truthfully affirm that, in my then condition of nervous exhaustion, it was a genuine torture to me to have to listen to the litany of silly baby-phrases which occupied exclusively so many ugly, wrinkled mouths.

The nurse took it up:

"Pitty ittie Riri dinkie mikkie, ven do by-by."

The parents and grandparents approved her suggestion with a general smile of beatitude. As for me, an invincible disgust made me turn my eyes away from the girl. It was sickening to see her hypocrisy of zeal in joining in the family chorus, which, however absurd, was still genuine. Her face was red; her hat was loaded with flowers; she wore a garnet scarf, and her gloves were aggressively pretentious.

While all the women were assisting to make Riri's toilet for the night, the young father, with a solemn

earnestness, unrolled a short hammock in the centre of the compartment, and fastened the ends to the bar at each side. Riri, wrapped in a shawl, was at last laid in this improvised resting-place.

Although my watch indicated only eight o'clock, night had already fallen. A lullaby, which made my flesh creep, was at last ended; a rigid silence and most attentive attitudes were assumed by all the relatives.

Taking advantage of the quiet, I now sought by the light of the night-lamp some distraction in my newspaper. While I opened and arranged it, a glance around showed me the indignant expressions which its rustling produced upon the faces surrounding me. "Well! all the worse for them," I thought.

But instantly a darkness, almost complete, interrupted my reading. The mamma of little Riri, rising noiselessly, had drawn across the glass of the lamp the thick curtain, so that the eyelids of her pet should be soothed by the darkness.

This act of tyranny excited me prodigiously. My first intention was to rise in my turn and pull the curtain away. However, I resisted this very justifiable impulse. I had been forbidden violent emotions. If I provoked an outbreak, I should be obliged to follow it up to its final outcome. Must I confess also that my reason advised me against entering upon so unequal a struggle, where my dissatisfaction, as yet endurable, would be transformed into an exasperation as ridiculous as it was useless?

I kept quiet therefore, intending to change my quarters at the first stop that was long enough. But I was suffering—raging internally against this mannikin, this diminutive tourist, whose place had only cost half of what mine had, and yet who took possession of the carriage. I gnawed my moustache, meditating plans of vengeance, of triumphant retaliation. I coughed frequently, and shook my head meditatively, as one who ponders on superior and important matters.

Finally, the announcement so impatiently awaited rang out:

"Rouen! Travellers for So-and-so change carriages!"

Upon this I hastened to seize my satchel. My foot was on the step when a functionary in a gold-laced cap stopped my way, roaring:

"Where are you going?"

"To Saint-Valéry."

"Good! Stay where you are!"

Upon that he slammed the door upon me with a decision that cut off further discussion as neatly as if he had cut off a limb.

It was all I could do to keep back a flood of bitter tears. The train rolled out, and I realized that fifty minutes were between me and the station of Motteville.

My nerves were in such a state that it seemed impossible to me to stand any more. The actions of my fellow-travellers had so irritated those poor nerves that there were moments when it seemed as if I must throw myself from the window. At last a little calmness came to me, and unconsciously I dozed off.

But the respite was brief. A shrill and piercing sound woke me with a start. The curtain was suddenly drawn from before the light. Riri was screaming. Above his hammock in a circle were the heads of the entire family, while each one poured forth a stream of exclamations.

"Poor ittie Riri! Did ittie Riri have naughty bad dream? Did Riri dit fightened wiv horrid black choo-choo? Has poor ittie Riri dot a pain in his ittie tummy?" etc., etc., etc., till my brain reeled. I ground my teeth audibly, and derisively laughed aloud. The audience turned, looked me over scornfully, and returned to Riri without deigning a word.

At the junction where I changed for Saint-Valéry, I rushed out like a madman. I took refuge in the last car of the train, and gave way to a nervous attack almost like a fit in its intensity. Truly this was a fine beginning for my cure.

At the station a carriage was waiting for me. With one bound I was in it.

"Drive," I said to the man, "as hard as you can go."

And still for a long time a convulsive trembling shook me. Concealed by the hood of the carriage, I knelt upon the cushions, and scrutinized for any sign of the enemy the empty horizon behind me where a soft light still glowed under the horns of the crescent moon.

. . . . . .

The next morning, scarcely rested from my tiresome journey, I started for an attractive little retreat which I recollected, a tiny islet reached by a frail bridge over a swift current. I was just about to enter this sheltered spot, screened by thick branches of weeping willows, when I heard a number of voices.

"Riri," said one of them, "pitty Riri frow tickie in watie."

Ah! I could not be mistaken. I could even distinguish the too familiar intonations as those of the paternal grandfather. I fled in a panic of terror. A cloud of sparks danced before my eyes. One must have suffered from my complaint to realize the sensations that beset me.

I should never finish should I try to tell all. I must cut it short.

A half-hour later Riri's attendants joined me on the beach. I hastened to leave it, but, in their turn influenced by a rising fog, the wretches did not scruple to follow me again. Sometimes for an instant perverse suggestions distracted me. I had remarked that Riri walked, as one skates, without lifting and lowering his feet. The slightest roughness in his path was for him the cause of an inevitable tumble. My gaze followed his little blue shoes with an idiotic intensity. Before each accident, "Bang!" I would say to myself diabolically, and I could imitate the wails that instantly followed. But unfortunately Riri's music and my own accompaniment were alike drowned in the chorus of sympathetic lamentation in which his entire family joined.

Again I sought safety in flight, and again in vain. On all sides, at the casino and on top the cliffs, in the

shady paths and on the sunny road, wherever the breeze of the fields or of the ocean circulated, the same clacketing assailed my tired tympanums. It was "Riri," here, "Riri," there, "Riri" everywhere.

There was nothing for it but to abandon the field, to flee, no matter where, very far, to some lonely desert. I had already delayed too long. Already spasms in my throat, nervous twitchings, trembling of the fingers and the eyelids, had commenced to annoy me as they had three months before.

. . . . . .

My valise packed, my bill settled, I went to the livery-stable to be sure of getting the right carriage. In the open space before the church I came upon a tumultuous crowd. In the midst of it were three persons crying and gesticulating. It was Riri's two grandfathers and his mother, all three of them red and perspiring. As soon as the young woman spied me, "Monsieur! monsieur!" she entreated. "Have you seen him? My little Riri—you know him, do you not?"

She burst into sobs. Two hours ago her little boy had disappeared. She explained this to me in hurried and broken phrases. The nurse had brought Riri back to their villa for his luncheon. For one moment he was left alone in the garden. One moment! And there was no more Riri!

Disturbed by contradictory emotions, I regarded her attentively. With confident eagerness she implored my help. Among the faces of the passers-by she had caught sight of mine, which, of course, was not quite strange to her. In such a calamity that seemed enough to constitute me her friend.

I look at her with more and more attention. The splendor of maternal love shines through the apple-bloom of her cheeks, vibrates in her quivering nostrils, and wide, light eyes. She is transfigured. She is—well, yes—she is beautiful.

"Ah! ah!" she cries, "speak—say something!" This time she is addressing her husband, who appears to be

returning from the cliffs and who is followed by the frightened nurse. A despairing gesture is her only answer.

"God in heaven!" she groans. "Is it true? Is it possible?"

Clasping her two hands to her throbbing bosom, with a supreme effort, she calls aloud three times, "Riri!—Riri!—Riri!—"

My soul is stirred by the unaccustomed sound of that voice, whose intonations denote a supreme degree of human anguish. I hazard a few words of comfort and of suggestion. They are eagerly received, investigated, developed by a hundred questions, and as many exclamations and suppositions. I reply. They listen earnestly. I find myself instantly absorbed into the anxious group of these unknown persons from whom a moment before I had been fleeing, with a heart full of hatred and malice.

Is there anything for me to do but to help? I am dragged along in the disorderly procession of the family. The two grandmothers are added to it. Their alarmed inquiries go from one to the other. I am carried on between them. One of them has no bonnet, the other limps lamentably.

To right and left the astonished people on the streets part to let our procession, of which I am the centre, through. Each one looks back constantly, looks forward and around, reasons and argues, hesitates, and takes at a venture any accidental direction. Complaints, prayers, advice, suppositions resound on all sides.

"Did any one go to the beach?"

"Yes, the whole length of it. I went myself——"

"But the river! It is very deep."

"And the well! The marshal's well!"

"It is covered."

Everything is imagined and discussed—the mill-pond, the pasture of a vicious bull, the race-track. Inquiries have been made everywhere. Nothing can be heard.

As we turn into the main road, a big boy is digging

in the field. The despairing mother addresses herself to him.

"Monsieur, if you please, have you not seen a little boy pass here? He had a sailor-suit on—a very little boy, three years old."

The digger scratches his head meditatively.

"Oh, yes," he said finally. "A little fellow, about so high," he stretches out his hand a short distance above the ground, and concludes: "Well, I ain't seen nothing of him."

"O my God! my God in heaven!" cries the mother.

A little farther on an old peasant woman in a cart was interrogated, and mumbled, in reply:

"No, no, I ain't seen nothing like that, nothing at all. Only thing I've met was a lot of gypsies, and two pretty ugly-looking bears they had, too."

Riri stolen! By mountebanks! How was it they had not thought of this horrible possibility, which was received with as much consternation as if it had been the news of his death.

Nevertheless, the old woman's news was precious. They hasten back to the village. I offer the tilbury which was harnessed up for me. The two grandfathers hoist themselves into it. Riri's father follows them, his stiff, pale face paler than ever. The coachman cracks his whip. They are lost in a cloud of dust. Those that are left seem to scatter unconsciously. When I turn, they are all off on the search.

. . . . . .

This drama, so simple in itself, but as yet dignified by the mystery as to its dénouement, had produced in me unaccountable sensations. My whole nervous system, all my muscles, relaxed for so many weeks, recovered their free play and natural expansion. It seemed to me that my blood flowed more freely, and filled my veins with waves more pure and abundant, since a powerful pity had dislodged from my heart all my misanthropical emotions and selfish anxieties. With slow footsteps I passed along the shady path that leads to the flowery cemetery of Veules. Situated at the top

of the cliffs no monument saddens it with funeral architecture or intercepts the splendid panorama of the open sea. Only small crosses spread over the earth their humble wooden arms. At the entrance, however, an abandoned chapel, without roof or front, raises still its three walls of consecrated stone. In its niches wild flowers have replaced the statues of the saints. I sought there a shelter from the sharp wind blowing in from the sea.

The night was falling, the cool twilight was full of aromas and of mystery. As the sand crunched beneath my feet, a little cherub's head, all yellow and rose-tinted, glanced through the ruins and vanished among the tombs.

A superstitious shiver ran over me. What an unexpected vision!—at this hour!—in this place!

A second time a fleeting glimpse of a moving silhouette caught my eye. Suddenly, with a revealing instinct, I called imperatively, "Riri!"

I leaned forward, the better to see and hear. Immediately a child ran toward me, threw a great bunch of poppies to me, then turned about and scampered away.

But I soon seized this little body, as slippery as a lizard, and set off at a great pace for the village. Filled with proud exultation at my lucky zeal, I looked here and there for the only arms that had the right to receive from mine their supple and struggling burden.

As I went, holding the soft, warm little body close to mine, as Riri, the terror, tired at last, nestled in my arms, the little yellow head went down on my shoulder, and the mischievous eyes looked up at me with a tender caress—must I confess it?—my sick body and mind felt the healing of the childish touch, and Riri did not miss the tender kisses nor even the silly baby-talk to which he was accustomed.

Here is another pathetic picture of Russian peasant life, against a background of the lavish, almost barbaric, splendor of its ruling caste. This is from the pen of Henri Gréville, and was translated for *Belgravia*. Why is it that there are almost no Russian stories without this heart-breaking strain in them? Is the Russian character more melancholy than any other? Is the despotism of the Czar the cause of the trouble? Or have the Russians and those who describe them never learned the trick of humor?

THE LITTLE RUSSIAN SERVANT.

"WHO's that?" said the Countess, stopping in front of a young girl of fifteen or sixteen, bent over an embroidery frame. The young girl rose, prostrated herself thrice before her mistress, then getting up remained standing, her hands hanging by her side, her head slightly bent forward under the investigating gaze of the Countess, who through her eyeglass closely scrutinized her.

"It is the new girl, your highness," answered the head lady's-maid, coming forward with the air of importance that thirty years' employment gives to no matter what functionary. "She is the daughter of Foma, of the village of Ikonine. She is come in her turn to pay her father's *obrok*—he is in Moscow."

"These peasant girls can do nothing," said the Countess, with a wearied air: "what do you expect to get out of this one?"

"She doesn't embroider badly, your highness; pray look yourself. She can be put to the embroideries—not to the ground, but to the trimmings. This is for the toilet table of madame la Comtesse."

The noble lady, who could hardly see, being short-sighted from her birth, examined the embroidery frame so closely that the tip of her nose grazed the cloth.

"That's not bad," she said. "Come here, little girl."

The little girl advanced, and the Countess inspected her as minutely as she had done the embroidery.

"How pretty she is! What's your name?"

"Mavra."

The word came like a breath from the rosy lips.

"You must speak louder if you want us to hear you," said the head lady's-maid angrily.

Mavra turned her large, blue, startled eyes toward her, let them drop, and said nothing.

"Sit down to your work," said the Countess, amused at her new toy. With a quick, graceful movement, the young girl resumed her seat on the wooden chair, and the needle, firmly held between her agile fingers, went in and out of the stuff with that short, sharp noise that stimulates the action of the hand.

"That's right, you may go on," said the Countess, her nerves irritated by the regularity of the movement.

Then, turning her back upon the young girl and trailing the heavy, sumptuous folds of her dressing-gown along the carefully-washed pine-wood floor, she disappeared through the door, which was respectfully closed after her by the head lady's-maid. The Countess, an accomplished house-mistress, made a practice of paying a daily visit to this room, which was reserved for the women of her service. Mavra was left alone in the workroom, a large, well-lighted chamber, furnished simply with tables and chairs for the use of the innumerable women and girls invariably attached to the service of those noble ladies who knew so well how to maintain their rank in that blessed time of serfdom. At this hour the workroom was empty. Some of the women were washing, others ironing, some cleaning and turning upside down everything in the private apartment the Countess had just left. The young peasant girl, with her needle uplifted, rested her ruddy hand upon the edge of the frame and looked around her.

What multitudes of embroidered gowns with their rich lace trimmings hung there on the wall, waiting some slight repairs!—what endless petticoats with their ornamented flounces all freshly ironed on cords along the huge room!—what countless lace caps, worn hardly

an hour, pinned to a pincushion as large as a pillow, used only for this purpose! and there, in a basket on the corner of the table, what piles of cambric chemises, delicately piped and pleated, trimmed with Valenciennes lace and ornamented with bright ribbons! And all this for one person! without counting the silk stockings in that other basket, and the rings by dozens worn by the Countess on her thin fingers. In this world of living beings under God's heaven, what importance given to one person, who needed so many other persons to serve her! And how the nothingness of these was made more emphatic by the dominance of that! Mavra sat wonder-stricken. The head lady's-maid coming into the room found her still in a state of stupefaction, stupefied above all at having made these reflections.

"Well, you are lucky!" she said to her, with a pleased look. "Our Countess took a fancy to you at the first glance; you are now on the list of embroiderers! You may thank God for it. It is not often the Countess takes a fancy like that at first sight."

"Is she, then, unkind?" innocently inquired the girl.

"Unkind! Oh no; capricious, like all mistresses, but the kindest lady in the world, and generous! Besides, this is a rich house; nothing is counted—nothing at all. This is better than your village," continued Dacka, proud of belonging to such noble masters, and desirous to impress on the mind of the simple peasant girl the importance and dignity of the functions she was promoted to.

"It is more beautiful," replied Mavra, bending intently over her work.

"It was lucky they taught you to embroider, else you would have been sent to the poultry-yard to feed the cocks and hens and look after the calves. How did you learn?"

"My mother taught me: she was formerly in service; she was a *dvorovaia* in the time of the late Countess. She married a peasant."

"Ah!" said Dacka, "I thought your manners were not quite those of a peasant girl; if your mother was

in service, that's another thing. Come, take a cup of coffee with me. Prepare the coffee-pot and make haste before the others come; I can't ask every one, you understand."

To Mavra there was but little difference between the *isba* of her father and the workroom of the seignorial mansion. Here, as there, her life was spent in assiduous work from sunrise to sunset. There, her mother, an austere, sombre woman, like most village matrons to whom life had proved no light matter; here, the lady's-maid, often grumbling, but at times kind and even condescending. The chief difference between the two modes of life consisted in the daily visits of the Countess, who generally said nothing, but passed with a solemn air through this roomful of silent, awe-stricken women. But one thing was lacking to Mavra, and this nothing could replace—the evening hour of rest which she used to spend by the fountain when sent to draw water for her mother, or on the threshold of their cabin watching the spring rain falling soft and warm, melting the snow so quickly that its thickness might be seen visibly diminishing; or, again, in the month of May, standing at the edge of the forest, listening to the nightingales singing on the delicate golden branches of the perfumed birch tree.

Winter passed fairly well, but when the first breath of warm air set the melted snow streaming down the roofs, which again the night's frost transformed into long stalactites of ice, Mavra felt a strange, vague aching in her heart. The house was over-heated, and the close, nauseous air made her sick. What would she not give to run as of old over the moors, to see if the moss were beginning to appear under the crystallized transparent carpet of snow!

"What's the matter with this little girl?" asked the Countess one day, as she stopped before the frame at which the young peasant girl was diligently working. "She was as fresh as a rose and now she has grown yellow.—Do you feel pain anywhere, Mavra?"

Mavra raised her blue eyes to the noble lady who, for

the second time in her life, deigned to address her, and replied in her low voice:

"Nowhere, your highness."

"Then why are you so yellow?"

"I don't know, your highness."

The Countess dropped her eyeglass and looked kindly at the young girl.

"I know," said she after a moment's pause; "the child wants air. She came here from her village, and has passed the whole winter stooping over her frame. Henceforth, little girl, you must get out into the fresh air twice a day, and must learn the service of my bedroom; this will give you exercise."

Thereupon the Countess quitted the room, followed by Mavra's grateful eyes, now filled with tears. From that day Mavra worshipped the Countess; to approach her, to touch what she had worn, to serve her, to receive her orders and execute them with the utmost speed and dexterity, was the great joy of this humble girl. Her mistress, wrapped in all this gorgeous luxury, the elements of which had been so long under her eyes in the workroom, appeared to her as some august being nearer her Creator than any other of her fellow creatures. Not only did Mavra pray to God for her, but at times she inwardly prayed to her as to a saint, thinking the pleadings of a being so superior must have equal weight with the powers of heaven as with those of earth.

Summer was already on the wane when the noble mansion, habitually so tranquil, was suddenly filled with noise and gayety. The young Count Serge had sent his carriages on before him; saddle-horses and hounds were stamping and neighing in their stalls and barking in their kennels as though the one aim of life was to make the most noise possible in a given time.

"How handsome he is, our young Count!" Dacka kept on saying the livelong day, to while away the tedious hours in the silent workroom. "It was I who received him in my arms when he was born."

And she repeated again and again, with inexhaustible

complacency, the history of Serge's birth, and the legend of his boyhood up to the moment when this dear treasure of her heart had gone to join the corps of pages, his trunks laden with cakes, jams, and all that could possibly be eaten under heaven.

The workgirls gave listless heed to these hundred-times-repeated narrations, but Mavra was never tired of hearing them; it was like receiving a sort of gospel into her heart. Her good and revered protectress made all things dear and venerated that touched her nearly; and this only son, loved, adored, longed for, became a supernatural being, a kind of Messiah to her.

One morning at the end of August, as Mavra, who had risen early, was crossing the courtyard to go waken up the laundress, who had overslept herself, she saw, galloping along the enclosure, a *troïka* of black horses, with their heads covered with bells. "It's the young master!" thought the little servant; and without giving herself time for reflection, she ran to the ponderous gate and threw it wide open. At the same moment the brilliant equipage arrived; the coachman pulled together his noble beasts, and without slackening their gallop they shot like an arrow past Mavra, and ten steps further on stood stock-still at the foot of the steps. Dazed, her heart thrilled by she knew not what impression of fear and joy, she received full in the face the gaze of two large, black, amazed and amused eyes.

"How like his mother!" thought Mavra as she closed the huge gate that shut with a heavy bang.

She turned slowly toward the steps as Serge, jumping down from the carriage, looked round at her again; he smiled when he met her blue eyes full of simple admiration, and, giving her a friendly nod, entered the house of his fathers. A minute after, he was by the Countess's bed-side, pressed lovingly in her arms.

When they had chatted two whole hours, as they finished their tea, Serge, recollecting himself, suddenly said to his mother:

"What is this new acquisition you have made,

mother? A little fair-haired Raphael opened the gate for me this morning."

The Countess thought for a moment.

"Ah! I know," said she; "it's Mavra—a virtue—my dear child. A strange little creature who adores me."

"She is quite right," replied the son respectfully. "What do you do with her?"

"She embroiders in the afternoon, and in the morning she attends on me; but, Serge, you must be prudent. My house is strictly kept; don't you go and amuse yourself making gallant speeches to my girls."

"Oh, mother! what do you take me for?" carelessly replied the young man. "I think of a woman only when she is in a casket suited to her style of beauty. Now here you may have pearls, but the casket is totally wanting."

They burst out laughing together. Only those who thoroughly understood these two beings could have guessed beneath this light talk the strict propriety of the mother and the son's respect for the maternal home. But Russians of the *grande monde* are so constituted that, when they have no vice, they take all imaginable trouble to affect it.

On leaving the dining-room the Countess and her son directed their steps toward the garden. In front of the house, in the courtyard, they met Mavra stooping under the weight of an enormous pile of linen which she was carrying from the laundry. The sheets held in under her crossed hands reached so high that she had to raise her chin and turn her head sideways in order to see before her.

"See, there she is," said the Countess in French, stopping to look at her.

"It is hard to say whether she is a Raphael or a Greuze," said Serge. "This morning she had more the look of a Raphael with a Russian nose; it is a hybrid style of beauty, but it has a certain charm."

They continued their walk while Mavra entered the workroom with her pile of linen; when her hands were

free, she stood trembling and silent, as though she had been guilty of a crime.

"Well, what are you waiting for?" said one of the girls, pulling her by the apron.

"I don't know," replied Mavra. "I feel as if I had received a blow, and my hands keep on trembling."

"You carried too heavy a load for your strength. Sit down, and you will see it will pass off."

And in fact it did pass away in a few minutes, but from that moment Mavra was haunted by a pair of black eyes whose owner little suspected her infatuation.

Her veneration for the Countess was in no wise diminished by this. On the contrary, she loved her more if possible. But in place of one idol she had two. By little innocent tactics that surprised herself, she succeeded in having the service of the young Count's room assigned to her, and thenceforth her happiness was complete. The care of the wardrobe was in the hands of the valet-de-chambre, who scrupulously avoided doing anything else.

Serge was the most breakneck rider in the world; not from bravado, since for the most part he was alone when he performed his wild exploits, but from instinctive contempt for danger. One fine morning, clearing a hedge six feet high—there were none lower—the Count's horse stumbled and fell on its side. A touch of the spur made it spring up, but when Serge tried to spur the other side, that on which it had fallen, he suffered excruciating pain. Fortunately it was the last hedge, else he would have had some difficulty in getting home. He pushed on, however, and reached the entrance; but when he endeavored to rest his foot on the stirrup to alight, he found it absolutely impossible, and amid the lamentations of the servants who had gathered around, he had to let himself be taken down from his horse and be dragged, as he said, like a bundle to his bed.

When he was duly unbooted and examined, the supreme indifference with which he allowed himself to

be handled and moved about, in spite of the paleness of his face, did not lessen the fact that he had seriously fractured his tibia.

The bone-setter was sent for, in conformity with a precept of the Countess's, who preferred a bone-setter at hand to the first surgeon in the world 300 miles off. A horribly-complicated dressing, bristling with splints and bandages, was applied to the leg, with very respectful but formal injunctions not to move, and to remain in bed for six weeks.

Six weeks! and the sporting season good, and flights of partridges started every minute by the Count's dogs, hunting now for their own pleasure, the door of the kennel being seldom closed; the horses neighing from sheer weariness, and the grooms giving themselves lumbago brightening up trappings that were now to lie unused.

The Countess was a good reader, in spite of her eyeglass; she read untiringly, the result of which was to send the patient to sleep—infallible result; simply an affair of time, often in ten minutes, sometimes an hour. Serge's breathing would become regular, the fever that colored his cheek bones would gradually disappear, and then the good mother, closing the book, would go about her duties as mistress of the house, leaving Mavra in charge of her son.

Gradually the needle of Mavra's embroidery work would slacken its motion, and for long hours her eyes remain fixed on the face of the sleeping young Count. Daylight would decline, and no candles be brought, lest the healing rest should be disturbed.

Seated near the window in the deepening shadow, the outlines of her figure relieved against the pale blue autumn sky in which her dear stars were fast gathering, Mavra would lose herself in a vague infinite ecstasy as she sat gazing at her sleeping young master, whom her heart only could now see. At the first sign of his awaking she was on her feet with her hand upon the bell. On the arrival of the lamp Mavra would withdraw to the workroom. At night in her dreams she

would continue her spiritual, almost mystical, contemplation of the beautiful fair head asleep on its pillow.

When Serge got well, she was the prey of an implacable, unconscious, immortal love. Henceforth she belonged to her idol. Present or absent, he was her adored master, for him alone she breathed. She would have almost hated the convalescence that day by day was taking him from her, had not the young man's weakness obliged him frequently to seek her aid. Supporting himself with a stick in one hand, and resting the other on Mavra's shoulder, he would walk round his room. She was happy and proud the day when, to give the Countess a surprise, she led him thus into the little *salon*, where the Countess, thinking he was asleep, was reading a devotional book. The agitated joy of the mother and the nervous gayety of the son brought tears to the eyes of the young peasant girl; but stoical, like all her race, she drove her tears back to her heart.

Serge walked alone with a stick, then without a stick, limping a little; by-and-by his firm elastic tread was heard again on the waxed oak floor. The northern early winter was come, snow already blocking up from time to time the seignorial mansion, then melting under the breath of a warmer wind, till the great winter blockade finally set in. One day a sledge lined with fur, drawn by spirited horses, clinking the bells that studded the harness, drew up before the door. Serge and his mother stepped into it, waving a friendly farewell to the household that crowded around with noisy benedictions. The Countess was to pass the winter at St. Petersburg, where her son was to resume his service in the hussars of Grodno. When they were gone, when the heavy gate which Mavra had opened one beautiful August day was shut, and the snow fell slowly in large flakes, reflecting the colors of the prism, it shut out all the outer world from the inmates of the seignorial mansion.

Mavra returned to her embroidery frame, no longer under the orders of the good Dacka, but under the capricious, fitful superintendence of a housekeeper

charged in the interval with the workroom department. Life was not so easy, but what mattered it to Mavra that there should be more harshness or less kindness? She did not live in the present. Her waking hours were passed in an innocent ecstasy that wore her away without suffering. She did not know that this was love. Had she known it, no amount of prayers or tears would have been enough to expiate her unpardonable sin. She loved just as flowers blossom; her ideal was exalted, her dream pure, and she lived upon them. One less chaste would have died. As for the young Count, he had no idea of all this.

The Countess came back in the spring, and the house resumed its grand, hospitable ways. Mavra was profoundly touched to find that her mistress, far from having forgotten, inquired kindly after her. She returned to her personal attendance upon the Countess with more devoted fervor than ever. Later on, the young master was to come back. Dacka conveyed in a mysterious manner that he had something better to do than to bury himself in the country. In the evening she confided to the laundress, in interminable whispers, secrets that were no doubt interesting, but which Mavra made no attempt to overhear, being by nature and taste discreet and reserved.

On the eve of St. John, when young girls plait crowns of flowers, which they throw into the river to see if they are to be married within the year, Mavra went, like the others, to consult fate after this graceful fashion. She never dreamed of marriage; it was a closed world to her, into which she had no desire to penetrate; but she would plait a crown and watch it through the eddies of the capricious stream. The girls had thrown in their garlands. Mavra's got entangled in flowers that a young lad of twenty had just flung in. He was a carpenter. The two crowns whirled round in company, and vanished together from view at the bend of the river.

"Here we are engaged, Mavra," said the carpenter. "Let it be once for all."

"No," she replied calmly, without blushing.

"Why? Do you dislike me?"

"No, not more than other people. I don't wish to marry."

This was enough to make the carpenter persist in his wish. He tried every means—went the length of begging the Countess to intercede for him. Mavra, sent for by her mistress, gave the same explanation.

"Well, if the child does not wish to marry, leave her alone," said philosophically the excellent lady, who would have scrupled to force a fly to drink a drop of milk.

And Mavra by her own desire was devoted to celibacy.

In the month of September Serge returned, but only for eight days. He brought no dogs nor equipages with him this time. When he saw Mavra he gave her a friendly smile, and then thought no more about her. When he went away his mother accompanied him, and the house was again plunged into solitude long before the usual time. Six weeks later the news arrived that the young Count was married.

This announcement was the signal for great rejoicing. According to ancient usage, barrels of sweet beer and hydromel were brewed; white bread and meat were distributed to the whole village. The poor had abundant alms, and the whole retinue of servants had new dresses. Mavra had a handsome blue woollen dress and a silk handkerchief. No one was forgotten; debts in arrear were remitted, and the young girl was suddenly told she might return for the winter to her family, till her father could make new arrangements for the payment in kind of what he owed.

This was no joyful news for the young peasant girl, but resignation is an inherent Russian virtue; she packed up her clothes in a basket, and one fine morning courageously set out on foot for her native village. She was received coolly by her mother. One mouth more to feed! besides which, peasants are sparing of their demonstrations of affection. After a few days

Mavra relapsed into her old habits, bent all day over her embroidery frame by the narrow window, in the evening standing leaning against the door, gazing, as was her wont, at the stars. More than ever she loved them; behind these marvellous lights, that she likened to tears—for she was often sad now—she saw the black eyes and handsome, indifferent face that had taken possession of her soul. As long as she was staying in the grand seignorial mansion where the image of her idol met her at every step in familiar attitude, where she had only to close her eyes to see Serge before her, Mavra was happy; she was of those for whom the innocent and daily presence of the beloved makes the whole happiness of life. Here, where nothing spoke of him, she felt for the first time the pain of separation. Uneasy, she asked herself what it was that was torturing her to this degree, and the truth nearly dawned upon her. But she stopped the thought, not daring to sound it further, saying to herself that there must be at the root of all this suffering some great sin she herself was ignorant of. Morning and evening she knelt long before the sacred images, imploring God to deliver her from her pain; and feeling herself soothed by this effusion of mystic tenderness, she kept her sadness to herself, still refusing to fathom it. But she was visibly wasting away: the smoky atmosphere of her home had now the same painful influence upon her that the want of fresh air had formerly when she first left her village. She passed the winter suffering, uncomplaining, unrelaxing in her work. Gradually she gave up looking at the stars. Not only did they more than ever look like tears, but no sooner did she turn her eyes toward the night sky than they filled with tears so that she hardly knew whether it was the fires of heaven or her own tears that sparkled beneath her eyelids.

Spring came, though more tardily than usual; then summer with its field labors. The Countess seemed to have forgotten Mavra, who thought with ever more and more resigned sadness of this much-loved mistress.

Her indulgence concerning the service-dues of her

family appeared to the young girl not a favor, but a punishment. At haymaking as at harvest young lads seek out the girls. Had Mavra wished it, she might have found ten husbands. She was no longer quite young according to the notion of peasants, who marry their daughters at sixteen and their boys at twenty. She was getting on to twenty, and her mother at times reproached her, treating her as a "useless mouth," although Mavra's embroidery was readily bought by the traders from the large towns, who came to the village twice a year.

In the beginning of September, Serge said to his young wife, who was about to make him a father:

"If you follow my advice, you will yourself nurse our child."

"I should like to do so, but then I must have a trained, devoted servant, one endowed with all the virtues," answered the young wife, "and mamma says this is more difficult to find than a suitable nurse."

"It is quite true," said the Countess, present at this family council, which had taken place on an average thrice a week for the last four or five months; "but, Serge, now that I think of it, we have Mavra! the sweetest, quietest, most devoted of nurse-tenders!"

"Mavra! the very thing. How is it we never thought of her before? She is not trained, for she is unmarried, but she is very active and intelligent!"

The manager was written to, ordering him to send on Mavra by the convoy which every year, about this period, brought to St. Petersburg fruits, preserves, salt, provisions, linen, and, in short, all the products of the earth. The young girl once more packed her clothes up in her little basket, and took her seat on one of the long file of heavy wagons that slowly rolled along the roads for eight or nine days, sleeping at night under the linen awning drawn over the chests of preserves, while the horses were in the stables, and the wagoners by their sides. Sometimes on awaking she saw the stars, but they no longer brought tears to her eyes.

When the convoy of provisions arrived, and Mavra, still dizzy, had made the necessary change in her dress, she was led into the room of the young Countess, where the whole family was assembled, augmented within the last two days by a superb new-born baby, which none of the servants knew how to manage.

"Here you are, Mavra. Good morning!" said the triumphant father, taking up his son in his awkward arms, at the risk of making him roar still louder. "You have a light hand and a gentle voice. I give you my son to take care of."

"I humbly thank you," said the young girl, pale with joy. "I shall do my best."

She carried the infant into an adjoining room, where she soon learned the special care to be given to a child of noble race, which was as different from its cradle from that of little peasants, his brothers in God's sight, as he would be the rest of his life. Toward evening the young mother, surprised at no longer hearing the music her first-born had already had time to accustom her to, sent Serge out to find the reason of this unusual silence. The young master entered the large dark room where Mavra was slowly pacing up and down, the child's cheek pressed against hers, warming it with her warm breath and the love of a heart henceforth happy. She was singing a peasant lullaby in a low voice, inventing words to the tune. "Dear child of my master, sleep on your servant's heart, that loves you, treasure more precious than all things, my joy, my share of happiness in this world—my little star——"

Serge returned on tiptoe to his wife.

"I think our minds may be quite at ease," said he.

Mavra is now old. She declares that she has always been perfectly happy.

There are, as every one knows, so few homely women in America that such an agency as Emile Zola describes in the following story would hardly flourish here. It has been translated for ROMANCE by Mrs. Carlton A. Kingsbury.

THE AGENCY FOR FOILS.

I.

I WAS astonished, yesterday, when I heard of an industry which a man named Durandeau has had the ingenuity to start. It is founded upon the idea of making money out of ugliness.

You undoubtedly have sometimes met women walking, two and two, upon the larger avenues. They saunter along, stopping to look into the shop-windows, trailing their gowns in a graceful and engaging fashion. They walk arm-in-arm, like intimate friends, speaking frequently to each other in an affectionate manner; they are nearly of the same age and are clothed with equal elegance; but always one is possessed of faultless beauty, while the other is atrociously ugly—an ugliness which iritates, which holds the gaze, which compels the passer-by to make comparison between the two. Confess that, occasionally, you have followed the two women. The ugly one, alone upon the avenue, you would have fled from; the young woman with a merely pretty face, you would have passed indifferently. But as i is, the ugliness of the one has enhanced the beauty of the other.

The monster, the young woman atrociously ugly, belongs to Durandeau's Agency. She takes the part of a Foil—a Contrast—a Set-off.

The wonderful Durandeau has hired out this ugly one, in consideration of five francs per hour.

II.

HERE is the history of the institution: Durandeau is an eccentric and inventive manufacturer, rich into the millions. For many years he sighed whenever the thought came to him that no one had ever been able to utilize the ugliness of women.

One day, he was suddenly struck by an inspiration. He was strolling down the Boulevard, when he saw, walking in front of him, two young women, one beautiful, the other ugly; and as he looked at them, he comprehended that the ugly woman acted as a foil, by which means the pretty woman was made to appear beautiful.

"It is just and logical," he said to himself, "that as a beautiful woman buys ribbons, rice-powder, and false hair, with which to beautify herself, she has the right to buy ugliness as she would an ornament which pleased her."

Durandeau returned home to think over the matter at his ease. The commercial operation which he contemplated would, necessarily, have to be conducted with great delicacy. He did not wish to launch out, at a venture, on an enterprise which would be entirely agreeable, if successful, but ridiculous, if a failure. He passed the entire night in making calculations and in reading the philosophers who have written the best things about the weaknesses of men and the vanity of women. At dawn, he had decided. The philosophers had told him so much of the foibles of humanity that he already counted, in his thoughts, a numerous *clientèle.*

III.

I WISH that I were competent to write an epic on Durandeau's Agency. It would be an epic, burlesque yet sad—full of tears, yet sparkling with laughter.

Durandeau had more trouble than he had anticipated, in forming his bureau. Wishing to begin at once, he contented himself at first with simply pasting

on the trees, along the avenues and in the narrow streets, small posters upon which were these words:

WANTED

UGLY WOMEN TO DO EASY AND LUCRATIVE WORK!

He waited patiently for eight days, and not an ugly girl presented herself. There came to him five or six pretty girls who sobbingly asked for work; they were starving; they thought to save themselves by work. Durandeau, very much embarrassed, told them that they were too pretty; but they insisted that they were ugly, that it was pure gallantry and perversity on his part to say that they were pretty.

Then Durandeau comprehended that only good-looking girls have the courage to confess an imaginary ugliness. As for ugly girls, they never seem to realize that they differ from those around them. Advertise anywhere you will, offer ten francs to every ugly girl who presents herself, and you will not impoverish yourself.

Durandeau called in his posters. He engaged a half-dozen brokers and sent them into the city in quest of the ugliest girls they could find. There was a general recruitment of the ugliness of Paris. The brokers, men of taste and of tact, first acquainted themselves with the character and position of each ugly girl whom they found; speaking brusquely when the girl had to be urged with promises of high wages—with more delicacy when talking with a girl at the point of starvation.

In the quest for poor and ugly girls, who weep before their mirrors, the brokers had many memorable encounters.

Each morning, Durandeau received and inspected the collection. When the ugliness was unmistakable, when the face was stupid and heavy, Durandeau would compliment the brokers. But he mistrusted the original ugliness; he thought that the girls, sometimes, only appeared ugly.

IV.

One day when the Agency was definitely established, he sent out the following Prospectus:

Agency for Providing Foils.

L. Durandeau.

18, Rue M. . . .

Office open from 10 o'clock A.M. to 4 o'clock P.M.

Madame, I have the honor to inform you that I have founded an Agency which will render the greatest service to ladies, inasmuch as it will tend to improve and retain their beauty; I have invented a method, the use of which ought to heighten, with great effect, the graces accorded by nature. Until to-day, the adjuncts of beauty have been accessories of the toilet. One sees laces, ribbons and jewels; one knows that there is false hair, and that the deep color of the lips and the delicate rose on the cheeks are made by artistic touches.

I wished to solve the problem, seemingly unsolvable, of how to embellish or heighten beauty, leaving the world ignorant of the secret of the new grace. Without adding a ribbon, without touching the face, it was necessary to find an infallible means of attracting attention. I flatter myself that I have solved the apparently hopeless problem.

To-day, every lady who will honor me with her confidence will obtain, for a certain price, the admiration of every one. My article of toilet is of extreme simplicity and of certain effect. I need only to describe it, Madame, for you to immediately comprehend its use.

Have you ever seen a beggar-girl standing near a woman clad in silks and laces, who gave alms to her from her gloved hand? Have you ever noticed how the silk shone, as it touched the fluttering rags, how all the rich clothing took on an added luster beside that misery?

Madame, I offer to beautiful women the finest collection of ugly faces which can be found anywhere. Tattered garments make new gowns appear richer and more elegant: my ugly faces will make pretty women appear beautiful. All this is accomplished by a simple *foil* whom one takes by the arm and with whom one promenades the avenues.

Will you, Madame, honor me with your patronage? You

will find at my Agency *foils* the ugliest and the most varied. You can choose, according to your beauty, the kind of ugliness which enhances it.

Rates: One hour, five francs; an entire day, fifty francs.

Will you accept, Madame, the assurance of my warmest regards?

DURANDEAU.

V.

THE success of Durandeau's scheme was immense. From the first day, the Agency flourished; the office was filled with ladies, who chose, each one, a *foil* and carried her away with joy. One knows not with what delight a pretty woman takes an ugly one by the arm. She revels in her own beauty and rejoices in the ugliness of the other. Little by little, the patronage became regular; each foil had her employer. Durandeau rejoiced in the thought that he had created a new industry in the interests of humanity.

I know not whether one could render a good account of the feelings of those who play the part of foils. If there are days in which they laugh, there are also nights in which they weep.

The Foil is ugly; she is a slave. On the other hand, she is well-clothed; she gives her arm, oftentimes, to celebrities; is seen riding in carriages; eats at renowned restaurants; passes evenings at the theatre or opera. All day long she must be gay. At night, she raves and sobs and groans. She has left her beautiful costume at the Agency where it belongs. She is alone in her attic, looking into a piece of cracked mirror which tells her nothing but the truth. Her ugliness is there, all unadorned, and she feels that she is too ugly ever to be loved. Picture to yourself her grief, even while she smiles and talks with her companion. The beautiful woman takes a wicked pleasure in pretending friendship before the world, but treats her Foil like a servant, in private. But of what account is a soul that suffers! Humanity marches on! Durandeau will be the benefactor of future ages because he has invented an industry never before known.

Among the last letters dictated by Mrs. Rose Terry Cooke, whose recent death has been felt as a personal loss by all lovers of American literature, was one expressing her desire that ROMANCE should use whatever stories of hers seemed adapted to its purposes. One of her best, which even those who have read it will be glad to see again, is the following, which appeared when she was very young, in an early number of the old *Putnam's Magazine.*

"UNCLE JOSH."

JOSH CRANE was a Yankee, born and bred, a farmer on Plainfield Hill, and a specimen. If some strange phrases were grafted on his New England vernacular, it was because for fifteen years of his youth he had followed the sea, and the sea, to return the compliment, thereafter followed him, when by the time he was thirty-five he had laid up enough money to return, a thrifty bachelor, and, buying a little farm on Plainfield Hill, settle down to his ideal of life, and become the amusement of part of the village and the oracle of the rest.

We boys adored Uncle Josh, for he was always ready to rig our boats, spin us yarns a week long, and fill our pockets with apples red and russet as his own honest face. With the belles of the village Uncle Josh had no such favor; he would wear a pig-tail, in spite of scoff and remonstrance; he would smoke a cutty-pipe; and he did swear like a sailor, from mere habit and forgetfulness, for no man not professedly religious had a diviner instinct of reverence and worship than he; but it was as instinctive in him to swear as it was to breathe, and some of our boldly speculative and law-despising youngsters held that it was no harm in him, any more than "gosh" and "thunder" were in us; for he really meant no more.

However, Uncle Josh did not quite reciprocate the contempt of the other sex; before long he began to

make Sunday night visitations at Deacon Stone's, to "brush his hat o' morning," to step spry, and wear a stiff collar and stock, instead of the open tie he had kept, with the pig-tail, long after jacket and tarpaulin had been dismissed the service; so the village directly discovered that Josh Crane was courting the school mistress, "Miss Eunice," who boarded at Deacon Stone's. What Miss Eunice's surname might be I never knew, nor did it much matter; she was the most kindly, timid, and lovable creature that ever tried to reduce a district school into manners and arithmetic; she lives in my memory still, a tall, slight figure, with tender brown eyes, and a sad face, its broad lovely forehead shaded with silky light hair, and her dress always dim-tinted, faded perhaps, but scrupulously neat and clean.

Everybody knew why Miss Eunice looked so meekly sad, and why she was still "Miss" Eunice: she had been "disappointed;" she had loved a man better than he loved her, and, therein copying the sweet angels, made a fatal mistake, broke her girl's heart and went to keeping school for a living.

One day Mrs. Stone announced to old Mrs. Ranney (who was as deaf as a post, and therefore very useful, passively, in spreading news confided to her, as this was in the church porch) that "Miss Eunice wan't a going to hev Josh Crane, 'cause he wan't a professor; but she didn't want nobody to tell on't," so everybody did!

It was true that Miss Eunice was a sincerely religious woman, and though Josh Crane's simple, fervent love-making had stirred a thrill within her she had thought quite impossible, still she did not think it was right to marry an irreligious man, and she told him so with a meek firmness that quite broke down poor Uncle Josh, and he went back to his farming with profounder respect than ever for Miss Eunice, and a miserable opinion of himself.

He was a person without guile of any sort; he would have cut off his pig-tail, sold his tobacco keg, tried not

to swear for her sake, but he could not pretend to be pious, and he did not.

A year or two afterward, however, when both had got past the shyness of meeting, and had set aside, if not forgotten, the past, there was a revival of religion in Plainfield—no great excitement, but a quiet springing up of "good seed" sown in past generations, it may be—and among the softened hearts and moist eyes were those of Uncle Josh. His mother's prayers had slept in the leaves of his mother's Bible, and now they awoke to be answered.

So earnest and honest was he that, for a whole week after he had been examined and approved by the church committee as a probationer, he never once thought of Miss Eunice; when, suddenly, as he was reading his Bible and came across the honorable mention of her name by the apostle, he recollected with a sort of shamefaced delight that now perhaps she would have him; so, with no further ceremony than reducing his dusty flax-colored hair to order by means of a pocket-comb, and washing his hands at the pump, away he strode to the school house, where it was Miss Eunice's custom to linger after school till the fire was burnt low enough to "rake up."

Josh looked in at the window as he "brought to," in his own phrase, "alongside the school 'us," and there sat the lady of his love, knitting a blue stocking, with an empty chair most propitiously placed beside her in front of the fire-place. Josh's heart rose up mightily, but he knocked as little a knock as his great knuckles could effect, was bidden in and sat himself down on the chair in a paroxysm of bashfulness, nowise helped by Miss Eunice's dropped eyes and persistent knitting. So he sat full fifteen minutes, every now and then clearing his throat in a vain attempt to introduce the point, till at length, desperate enough, he made a dash into the middle of things and bubbled over with: "Miss Eunice, I've got religion! I'm sot out for to be a real pious man; can't you feel to have me now?"

What Miss Eunice's little trembling lips answered, I

cannot say, but I know it was satisfactory to Josh, for his first reverent impulse, after he gathered up her low words, was to clasp his hands and say—"Amen," as if somebody had asked a blessing; perhaps he felt that he had received one in Miss Eunice.

When spring came, they were married, and were happy, Yankee fashion, without comment or demonstration, but very happy. Uncle Josh united with the church, and was no disgrace to his profession, save and except in one thing—he would swear! Vainly did deacons, brethren and pastor assail him with pleading eyes; vainly did he himself repent, and strive and watch, "the stump of dagon remained," and was not to be easily uprooted. At length Parson Pitcher, being greatly scandalized at Josh's expletives, used unluckily in a somewhat excited meeting on church business (for in prayer meetings he never answered any calls to rise, lest habit should get the better of him and shock the very sinners he might exhort), Parson Pitcher himself made a pastoral call at the farm, and found its master in the garden hoeing corn manfully.

"Good-day, Mr. Crane!" said the old gentleman.

"Good-day, Parson Pitcher, good-day! d——d hot day, sir," answered the unconscious Josh.

"Not so hot as hell for swearers!" sternly responded the parson, who, being of a family renowned in New England for no way mincing matters, sometimes verged upon profanity himself, though unawares. Josh threw down his hoe in despair.

"O Lord!" said he, "there it goes again. I swear! the d——d dogs take it! If I don't keep a goin'. O Parson Pitcher, what shall I dew? It swears of itself. I am clean beat trying to head it off, con—— no! no! I mean confuse it all! I'm such an old hand at the wheel, sir!"

Luckily for Josh, the parson's risibles were hardly better in hand than his own profanity, and it took him now a long time to pick up his cane, which he had dropped in the currant bushes while Josh stood among the cornhills wiping the sweat off his brow, in an ab-

ject state of penitence and humility; and as the parson emerged like a full moon from the leafy currants, he felt more charitably disposed toward Josh than he had done before.

"It is a very bad thing, Mr. Crane," he said; "it scandalizes the church members, and I think you should take measures to break up the habit."

"What upon arth shall I do, sir?" piteously asked Josh, "it is the d—dest plague! oh! I swan to man I've done it agin!"

And here, with a long howl, Josh threw himself down in the weeds and kicked out like a half-broken colt, wishing in his soul the earth would hide him, and trying to feel as bad as he ought to, for his honest conscience sturdily refused to convict him in this matter, faithful as it was in less sounding sins.

I grieve to say that Parson Pitcher got behind an apple tree, and there—cried, perhaps! for he was wiping his eyes and shaking all over when he walked off, and Josh, getting up considerably in a state of dust, if not ashes and sack-cloth, looked sheepishly about for his reprover, but he was gone.

Nevertheless, he paid another visit to Josh the next week, and found him in a hopeful state.

"I've hit on't now, Parson Pitcher!" said he, without waiting for a more usual salutation. "Miss Eunice she helped me, she's a master cretur for invention I s—sugar! there! that's it! When I'm a goin' to speak quick, I catch up something else that's got the same letter on the bows, and I tell *yew!* it goes!—'r else it's somethin'. Halloa! I see them d—dipper sheep in my corn. Git aout! git aout! you d—dandelions! *git* aout!"—here he scrambled away after the stray sheep, just in time for the parson, who had quieted his face and walked in to see Mrs. Crane, when Josh came back, dripping and exclaiming, "Peppergrass! them is the d—drowndedest sheep I ever see!"

This new spell of "Miss Eunice's," as Josh always called his wife, worked well while it was new; but the unruly tongue relapsed, and meek Mrs. Crane had grown

to look upon it as she would upon a wooden leg, had that been Josh's infirmity—with pity and regret, the purest result of a charity which "endureth long and hopeth all things," eminently her ruling trait.

Everything else went on prosperously; the farm paid well, and Josh laid up money, but never for himself. They had no children, a sore disappointment to both their kindly hearts, but all the poor and orphan little ones in the town seemed to have a special claim on their care and help; nobody ever went away hungry from Josh's door, or unconsoled from Miss Eunice's "keeping-room;" everybody loved them both, and in time people forgot that Josh swore; but he never did; and a keen pain discomfited him whenever he saw a child look up astonished at his oath.

He had been married about ten years when Miss Eunice began to show signs of failing health; she was, after the Yankee custom, somewhat older than her husband, and of too delicate a make to endure the hard life the Connecticut farmers must or do lead. She was pronounced by the Plainfield doctor to have successively "a spine in the back," a "rising of the lungs," and a "gitteral complaint of the lights" (was it catarrhal?). Duly she was blistered, plastered and fomented, dosed with Brandreth's pills, mullen root in cider, tansy, burdock, bitter-sweet, catnip and boneset teas; dried rattle-snake's flesh; and the powder of a red squirrel shut into a redhot oven living, baked until powderable, and then put through that process in a mortar, and administered fasting.

Dearly beloved, I am not improvising. All these, and sundry other and filthier medicaments, which I refrain from mentioning, did once, perhaps do still, abound in the islands of this Yankeedom, and slay their thousands yearly, as with the jaw-bone of an ass.

At length Uncle Josh tackled up Boker, the old horse, and set out for Sanbury where there lived a doctor of some eminence, and returned in triumph with Dr. Sawyer following in his own gig.

Miss Eunice was carefully examined by the physician,

a pompous but kindly man, who saw at once there was no hope and no help for his fluttered and panting patient.

One morning a sudden pang awoke her, and her start roused Josh; he lifted her on the pillow, where the red morning light showed her gasping and gray with death; he turned all cold.

"Good-by, Josh!" said her tender voice, fainting as it spoke, and, with one upward rapturous look of the soft brown eyes, they closed forever and her head fell back on Josh's shoulder, dead.

There the neighbor, who "did chores" for her of late, found the two when she came in. The moment that Mrs. Casey lifted his wife from his arm, and laid her patient, peaceful face back on its pillow, Josh flung himself down beside her, and cried aloud with the passion and carelessness of a child. Nobody could rouse him, nobody could move him, till Parson Pitcher came in, and, taking his hand, raised and led him into the keeping-room. There Josh brushed off the mist before his drenched eyes with the back of his rough hand, and looked straight at Parson Pitcher.

"Oh Lord! she's dead," said he, as if he alone of all the world knew it.

"Yes, my son, she is dead," solemnly replied the parson. "It is the will of God and you must be content."

"I can't! I can't! I ain't a going to," sobbed Josh—"'ta'n't no use talkin', if I'd only 'xpected somethin', it's that —— doctor! Oh, Lord! I've swore, and Miss Eunice is dead! oh gracious goody! what be I a goin' to do? oh dear, oh dear! oh *Miss* Eunice!"

Parson Pitcher could not even smile—the poor fellow's grief was too deep. What could he think of to console him but that deepest comfort to the bereaved, her better state? "My dear friend, be comforted! Eunice is with the blessed in heaven!"

"I know it! I know it! she allers was nigh about fit to get there without dyin'. O Lordy! she's gone to heaven and I ha'n't."

No—there was no consoling Uncle Josh; that touch of nature showed it. He was alone, and refused to be comforted; so Parson Pitcher made a fervent prayer for the living, that unawares merged into thanksgiving for the dead, and went his way, sorrowfully convinced that his holy office had in it no supernatural power or aid, and that some things are too deep and too mighty for man.

After this Josh retired to his own house, and, according to Mrs. Casey's story, neither slept nor ate; but this was somewhat apocryphal, and three days after the funeral, Parson Pitcher, betaking himself to the Crane farm, found Uncle Josh whittling out a set of clothes-pegs on his door-step, but looking very downcast and miserable.

"Good morning, Mr. Crane," said the good divine.

"Mornin', Parson Pitcher, hev' a cheer!"

The parson sat down on the bench of the stoop, and wistfully surveyed Josh, wondering how best to introduce the subject of his loss; but the refractory widower gave no sign, and at length the parson spoke.

"I hope you begin to be resigned to the will of Providence, my dear Mr. Crane?"

"No I don't a speck!" honestly retorted Josh.

Parson Pitcher was shocked.

"I hoped to find you in a better frame," said he.

"I can't help it!" exclaimed Josh, flinging down a finished peg emphatically. "I a'n't resigned! I want Miss Eunice. I a'n't willin' to have her dead, I can't, and I a'n't, and that's the whole on't! and I'd a —— sight ruther—oh goody! I've swore again. Lord-a-massy; 'n she a'n't here to look at me when I do, and I'm goin' straight to the d——. Oh land! there it goes! oh dear soul, can't a feller stop himself nohow?"

And with that Josh burst into a passion of tears, and fled past Parson Pitcher into the barn, from whence he emerged no more till the minister's steps were heard crunching on the gravel path toward the gate, when Josh, persistent as Galileo, thrust his head out of the

barn window, and repeated in a louder and more strenuous key, "I a'n't willin', Parson Pitcher."

There was in the village of Plainfield a certain Miss Ranney, the greatest vixen in those parts, and of course an old maid. Her temper and tongue had kept off suitors in her youth, and had in nowise softened since. Her name was Sarah, familiarized into Sally, and as she grew up to middle age, that pleasant, kindly title being sadly out of keeping with her nature, everybody called her Sall. Ran., and the third generation scarce knew she had another name.

Any uproar in the village always began with Sall Ran, and woe be to the unlucky boy who pilfered an apple under the overhanging trees of Miss Ranney's orchard by the road, or tilted the well-sweep of her stony-curbed well to get a drink; Sall was down upon the offender like a hail-storm, and cuffs and shrieks mingled in the wild chorus with her shrill scolding, to the awe and consternation of every child within half a mile.

Judge, then, of Parson Pitcher's amazement when, little more than a year after Miss Eunice's death, Josh was ushered into his study one evening, and, after stroking a new stove-pipe hat for a long time, at length said he had "come to speak about bein' published." The parson drew a long breath, partly for the mutability of man, partly for wonder.

"Whom are you going to marry, Mr. Crane?" said he, after a pause.

Another man might have softened the style of his wife to be—not Josh.

"Sall Ran," said he, undauntedly.

Parson Pitcher arose from his chair, and with both hands in his pockets advanced upon Josh like horse and foot together; but he stood his ground.

"What, in the name of common sense and decency do you mean by marrying that woman, Joshu-way Crane?" thundered the parson.

"Well, ef you'll set down, Parson Pitcher, I'll tell

ye the rights on't: you see I'm dreadfully pestered with this here swearin' way I've got; I kinder thought it'd wear off if Miss Eunice kep' a looking at me, but she's died"—here Josh interpolated a great blubbering sob—"and I'm gettin' so d—— bad! there! you see, parson, I do swear dreadful; and I a'n't no more resigned to her dyin' than I used to be, and I can't stan' it, so I set to figering on it out, and I guess I've lived too easy, han't had enough 'flictions and trials; so I concluded I hed oughter to put myself to the wind'ard of some squalls so as to learn navigation, and I couldn t tell how, till suddenly I brought to mind Sall Ran, who is the d—— and all, oh dear! I've nigh about swore agin, and I concluded she'd be the nearest to a cat-o'-nine-tails I could get to tewtor me, and then I reklected what old Cap'n Thomas used to say when I was a boy aboard of his whaler; 'Boys,' sez he, 'you're allers sot to hev your way, and you've got to hev mine, so it's pooty clear that I shall flog you to rope-yard, or else you'll hev to make b'lieve my way's yourn, which'll suit all round.' So you see, Parson Pitcher, I wan't a-goin' to put myself in a way to quarrel with the Lord's will agin, and I don't expect you to hev no such trouble with me twice as you've hed since Miss Eunice up an' died. I swan I'll give up reasonable next time, seein' it's Sall!"

Hardly could Parson Pitcher stand this singular creed of doctrine, or the shrewd and self-satisfied, yet honest, expression of face with which Josh clenched his argument. Professing himself in great haste to study, he promised to publish as well as to marry Josh, and, when his odd parishioner was out of hearing, indulged himself with a long fit of laughter, almost inextinguishable, over Josh's patent Christianizer.

Great was the astonishment of the whole congregation on Sunday, when Josh's intentions were given from the pulpit; and strangely mixed and hesitating the congratulations he received after his marriage, which took place in the following week. Parson Pitcher took a curious interest in the success of Josh's

project; and had to acknowledge its beneficial effects, rather against his will.

Sall Ran was the best of house-keepers, as scolds are apt to be; or is it in reverse that the rule began? She kept the farm-house Quakerly clean, and every garment of her husband's scrupulously mended and refreshed; but if the smallest profanity escaped Uncle Josh's lips, he did indeed "hear thunder," and, with the ascetic devotion of a Guyonist, he endured every objurgatory torrent to the end, though his soft and kindly heart would now and then cringe and quiver in the process.

It was all for his good, he often said, and by the time Sall Ran had been in Miss Eunice's place for an equal term of years, Uncle Josh had become so mild-spoken, so kind, so meek, that surely his dead wife must have rejoiced over it in heaven, even as his brethren did on earth.

And now came the crowning honor of his life. Uncle Josh was made a deacon. Sall celebrated the event by a new black silk frock, and asked Parson Pitcher home to tea, as is the great glory of a New England housekeeper. Pies, preserves, cake, biscuit, bread, short-cake, cheese, honey, fruit, and cream were pressed, and pressed again, upon the unlucky parson till he was quite in the condition of Charles Lamb and the omnibus, and gladly saw the signal of retreat from the table, he withdrawing himself to the bench on the stoop, to breathe the odorous June air, and talk over matters and things with Deacon Josh, while "Mrs. Crane cleared off."

Long and piously the two worthies talked, and at length came a brief pause, broken by Josh.

"Well, Parson Pitcher, that 'are calkerlation of mine about Sall did come out nigh onter right, didn't it?"

"Yes, indeed, my good friend!" returned the parson; "the trial she has been to you has been really blessed, and shows most strikingly the use of discipline in this life."

"Yes!" said Josh, "if Miss Eunice had lived, I don't

know but what I should 'a been a swearin' man to this day; but Sall, she's rated it out of me; and I'm gettin' real resigned, too."

The meek complacency of the confession still gleamed in Uncle Josh's eyes as he went in to prayers, but Sall Ran looked redder than the crimson peonies on her posy-bed.

Parson Pitcher made an excellent prayer, particularly descanting on the use of trials; and when he came to an end and rose to say good-night, Mrs. Crane had vanished, so he had to go home without taking leave of her. Strange to say, during the following year a rumor crept through the village that "Mrs. Deacon Crane" had not been heard to scold once for months; that she even held her tongue under provocation; this last fact being immediately put to the test by a few evil-minded and investigating boys, who proceeded to pull her fennel bushes through the pickets, and nip the yellow heads, receiving for their audacious thieving no more than a mild request not to "do that," which actually shamed them into apologizing.

With this confirmation, even Parson Pitcher began to be credulous of report, and sent directly for Deacon Crane to visit him.

"How's your wife, deacon?" said the parson, as soon as Josh was fairly seated in the study.

"Well, Parson Pitcher, she's most onsartainly changed. I don't believe she's got riled more'n once, or gin it to me once, for six months."

"Very singular!" said Parson Pitcher. "I am glad for both of you; but what seems to have wrought upon her?"

"Well!" said Uncle Josh, with a clear glitter in his eye, "I expect she must 'a ben to the winder that night you'n I sot talkin' on the stoop about 'flictions and her; for next day I stumbled and spilt a lot o' new milk on the kitchen floor, that allers riled her; so I began to say—'Oh, dear, I'm sorry, Sall!' when she ups right away, and sez, sez she—'You han't no need to be skeered, Josh Crane; you've done with 'flictions in this

world; I sha'n't never scold you no more. I ain't a goin' to be made a pack-horse to carry my husband to heaven!' and she never said no more to me, nor I to her, but she's ben nigh about as pretty-behaved as Miss Eunice ever since, and I hope I sha'n't take to swearin'. I guess I sha'n't, but do feel kinder crawly about being resigned."

However, Uncle Josh's troubles were over. Sall Ran dropped her name for "Aunt Sally," and finally joined the church, and was as good in her strenuous way as her husband in his meekness, for there are "diversities of gifts;" and when the Plainfield bell, on an autumn day, tolled a long series of eighty strokes, and Deacon Crane was gathered to his rest in the daisy sprinkled burying-yard beside Miss Eunice, the young minister who succeeded Parson Pitcher had almost as hard a task to console Aunt Sally as his predecessor had to insti l resignation, on a like occasion, into Uncle Josh.

This beautiful and touching history ought to be true, even if it is not. It is from the pen of Jacques Offenbach, the well-known composer of light operas, and it is translated for ROMANCE by Ralph Edmunds.

THE STORY OF A WALTZ.

My mother and sisters used to lull me to sleep by singing to me a sweet, slow waltz. I had never heard all of it. The first eight bars were the only parts of it that I knew. Perhaps those loved ones themselves were ignorant of the rest. These eight bars haunted me—fixed themselves on my brain with all the greater force because my charmed heart opened wide all the doors to them. Did not each note bring to me a thousand tender recollections? When they flitted through my mind I saw our old home—my father's home; I heard the voices of all those from whom I had long been separated, whom I had loved and who had loved me most warmly.

I was in Paris all alone, earning my daily bread by playing the violoncello in the orchestra of the Opéra Comique. I was then at an age when most children are still at school, with many years of school days still before them. Athough I was quietly jogging on toward the future, I regretted the past. Solitude was sometimes very oppressive to me.

This waltz, though nothing very wonderful, had at last come to assume strange proportions in my mind. It had ceased to be a mere waltz. It had become almost a prayer, which I hummed from morning to night, not as a supplication to Heaven, but because it seemed to me that when I repeated it, my family heard me, and when it echoed in my memory, I could have sworn it was my loved ones at home who responded to me. I cannot express how eagerly I desired to hear the whole of that waltz. I could not deceive myself. My continuations seemed charming to me when I extemporized

them, but when I repeated them, they spoke to me only of myself, and nothing of my loved ones at home, nor of the departed days of childhood.

Years came and went, but those eight bars did not fade away from my memory; on the contrary, they seemed deeper graven on it with each succeeding year.

One day, feeling that I could stand it no longer, I set out for home to hunt for the waltz. As there appeared to be no special cause for my journey, my father and the rest of the family covered me with caresses. They attributed my return to an increase of affection for them. They were mistaken, for I loved them so dearly that I could not, for the life of me, have loved them more than I did.

I dared not breathe to them one word about the waltz, lest I should destroy their illusions. It seemed to me I should wound their feelings were I to refer to it. Those who know what it is to love will understand what I mean.

One evening my father, who was fond of hearing me play, asked for some music. He was a learned and severe judge, and I always felt a little nervous at being asked to play before him. That evening, however, I did not wait to be pressed, and, without any prelude to make my fingers agile, I played the famous bars of the waltz which persecuted me.

"Is it possible!" said my father. "Do you still remember Zimmer's waltz?"

"Zimmer!" I exclaimed. "Is that waltz by Zimmer? Are you sure of that? Who was Zimmer?"

"Zimmer was a young composer, who, in times past, had some vogue," replied my father. "He began unusually well and was becoming popular, when he disappeared one day, and nobody knows what became of him."

"Do you know his waltz from beginning to end?"

"No, I do not."

"How could you, with your prodigious memory, have forgotten it?"

"For the excellent reason that I never knew it. Your

poor, dear mother sang it to put you to sleep, and I dare say she never knew more of it than those eight bars."

The next day I visited every music-shop in Cologne. I asked the dealers for Zimmer's waltz. I did not know its title, so I said: "It begins in this way," and I sang the first eight bars. They looked at me smilingly, but everywhere I met with a negative reply. I returned quite vexed to Paris.

For years after this experience, and during all my travels, I never entered a music-shop without asking for Zimmer's waltz. But all my efforts to unearth it were in vain. At last, I gave up all hope of ever finding the rest of it, and contented myself with the eight bars which invariably haunted my memory.

One morning, while I was settling an account with Brandus, the music publisher in Paris, he said to me:

"I have just heard of a poor fellow who really has some talent."

"Are you going to publish his music?"

"I would like to do so, but he is old and has no reputation."

"He will acquire reputation."

"He pretends he had reputation once."

"What is his name?"

"Zimmer."

"Zimmer! Did you say Zimmer? Where does he live? Give me his address. Quick! quick!"

"I don't know his address. He is to come here to-morrow to take back his manuscript."

"Brandus, my dear friend, do me a favor—a very great favor. Publish that manuscript, pay him ten times what it is worth and charge the money to me, but send the excellent fellow to see me. I would give anything to see him."

Brandus promised to grant both of my requests. I waited impatiently all of the next day to see Zimmer. He did not come. I waited the second day—months—years. Zimmer never put in an appearance.

I was vexed at first, but afterward I became resigned

to my disappointment. I said to myself that after all a wise man ought to content himself with little; that these eight bars had occupied a sufficient share of my life, and that I ought not to give further thought to the rest; that, after all, it could not amount to much since it had passed into oblivion, and, thank Heaven, the day had gone by when there were unknown masterpieces.

In 1871 I went to Vienna to attend the rehearsals of "Les Brigands." Vienna is fond of me and delights to spoil me. I am very proud of this and I never lose an opportunity to confess it. Whenever I visit the Austrian capital, my friends, who are a legion, give me a most hospitable reception and I am forced to enjoy all the pleasures of that city, which is the city of pleasure *par excellence.*

One night, while we were returning from Die Neue Welt, which is one of the most curious establishments in the world, our carriages were brought to a standstill by a mob which had assembled in front of a fifth-rate ballroom, frequented by soldiers and suburban workmen. We thought at first the crowd had been attracted by a battle between drunkards, or a conflict between lovers, for a man was lying on the ground. Dr. Falkner, who was one of the party, leaped from the carriage and went to see what was the matter. He was told that the ticket-taker of the ball had died suddenly. Dr. Falkner examined the man on the ground, and presently said:

"He is not dead, but is dying of starvation!"

Everybody tried to do something for the poor ticket-taker. He was given a glass of wine, and a collection was taken up for him. We contributed liberally. The doctor promised to call on the poor fellow in the morning, and asked his address. A woman gave him a visiting-card and, going up to the carriage-lamp, the doctor read aloud:

RODOLPHE ZIMMER,

PROFESSOR OF MUSIC.

Sternegasse, No. 268.

"Zimmer!" I exclaimed. "I know him! Put him in the carriage. Quick! I will take charge of him!"

We drove to the address on the card. Zimmer's room was on the fifth floor. The door was opened, and our hearts ached when we saw—not the room, but—the hole in which the poor fellow lived. Four naked, solid walls; a little straw in one corner, an earthenware jug, an earthenware porringer, a bit of soap—nothing else. Luckily we were in what was called a "furnished lodging-house," and the rooms on the first floor were almost decent. We had poor Zimmer placed in the best of them. Dr. Falkner promised me that he should be well taken care of.

A week or ten days afterward a servant announced to me: "Mr. Rodolphe Zimmer." At last I had got possession of *my* waltz! A tall, old man, with a noble face, entered my room. Misfortune had cruelly scratched his wrinkled cheeks with her claws. His eyes were gentle and resigned. Long white locks fell on his black coat, which was almost threadbare, but very neatly brushed. In fact, everything about him excited sympathy.

"Sir," said he, "I have come to thank you for your kindness to me."

"It is not worth mentioning," I answered. "I did nothing but follow the example of your friends."

"I have no friends. I have not long enough to live to talk to you of gratitude. I have come merely to say: 'Thank you.'"

"I repeat again, you owe me nothing. Do you know who I am?" I replied quite testily, for, to tell the truth, I thought his "Thank you" rather a poor return for all I had done.

"Jacques Offenbach."

"Yes, that is my name. Now, you can understand that between brethren of the same profession the very least thing that can be done is to help each other."

"Brethren!" murmured Zimmer in a bitter tone. "You say that out of politeness. Alas! I am nothing but a poor professor with absolutely nothing."

"I beg your pardon, but you have had your share of popularity. You have had talents."

"I am obliged for your courtesy."

"It is not courtesy. It is my sincere opinion."

"You may, perhaps, have heard that, and you repeat it to me to lessen the bitterness of alms. You do not, you cannot, know anything about me."

"You are mistaken, and I am going to prove it to you."

I went to the piano, and I played slowly the eight bars I knew so well. The old man lifted his head at the first notes. Stupefaction was followed by infinite delight. The artist in him straightened himself up, and a beam of joy shone through the tears which streamed down his hollow cheeks. His emotion affected me so that I had the utmost difficulty to get through the eight bars. As I arose from the piano, he ran toward me and took my hands, exclaiming:

"Ah! *Maestro*, dear *Maestro!* May God reward you! You have done a good deed. You have prevented me from dying—that was nothing. You give me strength to live—that is everything. So there is, indeed, somebody on earth who still knows me, and that somebody is you. Ah! how can I show my gratitude for this delight, which is so great, so unexpected."

"In a very simple manner," I replied. "You have but to play for me the rest of the waltz."

"The rest—the rest of my waltz?"

"Yes. It is the greatest favor you could do for me. When I have told you why, you will see that all is not settled between us, and that I am still your debtor."

Zimmer sat down at the piano and played as I had just done the eight bars. Then he stopped. I was all attention. He seemed to be trying to recall it. His face changed from astonishment to pain. Suddenly he clasped his brow in his hands, and exclaimed in terror: "I cannot recollect it! I cannot recollect it! Good heavens! I am going crazy—perhaps it is the excitement—*you* are listening to me—and yet this very morning I played it. That waltz is my life, myself—a very

mournful life. Let me go home, and I will bring the waltz to you. I will not be gone long."

"Be still more generous," I interposed. "Come and breakfast with me to-morrow, and then you will play the waltz to me and tell me your history."

That very evening a telegram summoned me to Paris. A month later I returned to Vienna. I then found that Zimmer had died in the interim, leaving a parcel for me.

I confess it was with emotion that I opened the packet. It contained the waltz, a small ring set with sapphires, an envelope yellowed by time, and these lines traced by a trembling hand:

Maestro:—I owe to you the sole pleasure I have enjoyed in forty years. Allow me, while dying, to bequeath to you the three objects which have recalled to me my past happiness. I promised to tell you my history: here it is. At the age of twenty-five I had been betrothed for three years. I adored my love with all my heart and soul. I worked day and night to become celebrated, that she might be proud of me and be happy. I believe there are still living people who knew her. Were they asked, they assuredly would say that there never appeared on earth a woman more perfect than she was.

One evening her mother said to me: "She is twenty years old; you may marry her."

I kissed both the hands of my darling's mother. My betrothed looked at me in silence. There was such happiness visible in her whole expression that I felt too touched to be able to speak. I left them to go to Prague, in order that I might bring my father to our wedding. When I returned with him a fortnight afterward, and, buoyant with happiness, I brought him to her house to meet her, a neighbor met me at her door and said: "Do not knock so loudly. She is dead!"

It was true. She was dead. I entered the house and found her old mother there weeping all alone. She was dead. There are young girls who die of consump-

tion; death's advances are followed day by day, and in six months the love of a lifetime is given them; but my betrothed died without an hour's illness, all suddenly, without any warning, with no time for last words, with no time for farewells. My father sobbed. He led me away, saying: "Do not despair!" He had never seen her.

Since that day I have vegetated, hopeless, disheartened, grieving and obscured. The enclosed envelope contains her hair. Seeing death approach, I have wished to burn it, but then I reasoned: "If you do not die, you will never console yourself for its loss." I beseech you to burn it without unsealing the envelope. The ring I gave her on the day of our betrothal. It cost me a hundred florins. I have been starving for many a day as I gazed on it; still it leaves me only with life. I bequeath it to you that it may remain unsold. Once more I thank you. May God keep all those you love!

. . . . . .

I burned the envelope containing her hair, without opening it. The ring shall not be sold. I have published the waltz.

This fine description of a French boar-hunt is from the pen of Alexander Dumas, and occurs in his remarkable narrative "Bernard." There it is simply an episode, subordinate to the awful tragedy of the hero. It has been separated from the main story, and adapted to its present use by the editor from the translation of Mary Cruger.

THE BOAR THAT LOST ITS TAIL.

THE story which I am about to relate to you is not a novel, a romance, or a drama. It is simply a youthful reminiscence.

I was born in a fine forest full of game. My father, a great huntsman, taught me in my earliest years to use a gun. At the age of twelve, I was already an excellent poacher.

If a rabbit ventured to approach within twenty-five paces of me, it was at once a dead rabbit. A hare even met the same fate at my hands; and once a roebuck, coming within range of my gun, was treated no more ceremoniously than were the hares and rabbits.

These different pieces of game I presented to some brave fellows among my friends, who, in return, kept me always supplied with powder and shot. Nearly all the keepers in the forest had hunted with my father, and had a keen remembrance of his liberality. Some were old soldiers, who had served under him and had obtained their positions in the forest by his influence. Thus these worthy souls, seeing in me the good qualities of "the General," as they styled my father, took me into their special friendship.

One Saturday evening, as I was sitting on the door-step of our house, feeding two sparrow-hawks, which I was training to catch larks, M. de Violaine passed.

"Well, my boy!" he said, "have you studied faithfully this week?"

"I have stood the second in my class," I said proudly.

"Truly?"

I showed him a silver cross which I wore suspended from my button-hole by a red ribbon, in proof of my statement.

"Then, Master Second! I invite you to a boar-hunt to-morrow!"

I fairly jumped for joy at this.

"And where?" I asked breathlessly.

"At Bernard's, of the New House."

"Ah! we will have a good time!" I said.

"I hope so."

"And so you spoil the boy!" said my mother, as she stood in the doorway. "Instead of helping me to conquer his unfortunate taste for hunting, which exposes him to so many dangers, you only encourage it. I will not let him go this time, unless you promise to keep him close to you."

"Be tranquil, he shall not leave my side," said M. de Violaine.

"On that condition, then, he may go," said my mother, who never could refuse me anything, "but remember, if any misfortune happens," she added in a lower voice, "I shall die of grief."

"Do not fear," said M. de Violaine. "He understands the business perfectly. Remember, my boy, to-morrow morning at six o'clock."

"Thank you!" I cried joyously. "I will not make you wait."

I put away my sparrow-hawks on their perch, to make my arrangements for the hunt, which consisted of cleaning my gun, oiling the lock, and preparing my bullets.

At six in the morning we started. All along the route keepers joined us. At the rendezvous we found the one who was called Bernard of the New House. In his hand was his bugle, which he at once sounded cheerily. We then learned that Bernard had traced to a point at about a league's distance, on the Dampleux Mountain, a magnificent boar.

We proceeded on our way, not without making the usual vainglorious boasts which hunters delight in.

We knew each other too intimately to deceive or be misled by such innocent vaunting, and we conceded frankly the meed of honor to those who were really strongest, or most skilful among us. These were, unquestionably, Berthelin, uncle of Bernard; Mona, an old keeper who had lost his left hand, but hunted not the less skilfully for that; and Mildet, who could do the most wonderful feats, especially with his gun.

Of course, the more awkward new beginners among us were rallied unmercifully for their blunders. Among these was a brave man named Niguet, and surnamed Bobino, who had the well-deserved reputation of being wisdom itself in planning a hunt, and also of being the worst marksman in the party.

Arriving at the place where the boar was concealed, Bernard signed to us to be silent. From that moment not a whisper was heard among us. Then Bernard showed the plan of operations to the Inspector, who gave his orders in the lowest of tones; and we took our places, while Bernard held his blood-hound in a leash, awaiting the signal to release him.

M. de Violaine kept his word to my mother. He placed me between Mona and himself, and directed me to keep within the shelter of an oak, into whose branches I could raise myself by my arms if the boar should turn upon me. This is the manœuvre usually adopted in such circumstances when hunting the wild boar.

At the end of ten minutes all was ready, and the signal was given. Then Bernard's dog, which had caught the scent at once, gave mouth with a force and eagerness that showed he was close upon the prey. There was a crash among the bushes, and I saw something rush past, but before I could bring my gun to my shoulder, it was gone. Mona fired hastily, but shook his head in the belief that he had not touched the beast. Then, a little further off, sounded another gunshot, then a third, which was followed by a wild halloo from the well-known voice of Bobino.

Every one ran, knowing the voice that called, but

all felt doubtful of any successful result. To our great astonishment we found Bobino tranquilly seated on the wild boar, with his pipe in his mouth, and striking a match to light it.

At his shot, the animal had fallen like a log on the spot, where it had since lain motionless.

We noisily congratulated the conqueror, who put on an air of great modesty, saying, as he remained seated on his prey,

"Ah! it is a trifle to us Provençals to overthrow these little beasts!"

In truth, the overthrow was perfect; the ball had struck behind the ear. Not Mona, Berthelin, or Mildet could have done better.

Bernard came up last of all.

"What the deuce are you saying, Bobino?" he cried. "They tell me the wild boar has fallen at your shot like a rabbit."

"It is true!" returned the triumphant keeper. "Poor Bobina will have plenty of boar-steaks this winter, and only those who can return the compliment shall be invited to share them. If the Inspector will do me that honor," he continued, taking off his cap with a low bow, "Mother Bobina will be infinitely pleased to have him taste her cookery."

Thus Niguet called his wife, with the idea that the feminine of Bobino was naturally Bobina.

"Thanks, Niguet!" said the Inspector. "I cannot refuse you."

"Truly, Bobino!" said Bernard, "if you mean to fire such shots always, with the permission of M. de Violaine, you should be decorated."

"Do so, my friend! do so! No one deserves it more than I," and Bobino continued to smoke with an air of phlegmatic content.

Bernard, approaching the wild boar from behind, took out his hunting knife, and with one blow severed its tail from its body.

The boar gave a deep groan.

"Ah! what is the matter, little one?" asked Bobino,

as Bernard attached the tail to the conqueror's button-hole. "It seems you have a regard for this little trophy!"

The boar groaned again, and moved one paw.

"Good!" cried Bobino, "good! you want to get it back again, little one? Well, take it then. That will be rather amusing!"

Bobino had scarcely spoken these words when he found himself rolling in the dust at ten paces distance, with his pipe broken between his teeth.

The boar, who had only been stunned, was revived by the bleeding that followed the cutting off of his tail. Throwing off the weight of Bobino by one effort, he stood upright, but trembled on his feet.

"Ah!" cried M. de Violaine. "Leave him alone for a moment. It will be curious to see what he will do."

"No, fire quickly!" exclaimed Bernard, turning to catch up the gun which he had laid aside to make the amputation he had just accomplished. "I know these fellows! He will escape——"

But it was already too late. The dogs, seeing the boar on his feet, had thrown themselves upon him, holding on by the ears and flanks, so that they actually covered him. No ball could touch him. The boar, dragging after him the whole pack of dogs, gained the shelter of the underbrush, and suddenly disappeared.

Bobino, furious at the affront he had received, rushed after the escaping animal.

"Catch him, Bobino!" cried Bernard. "Hold him by the tail!"

They all shouted with laughter at this.

Then came two gunshots.

Presently Bobino returned, looking very downcast. Both shots had missed, and the boar had fled, pursued by all the dogs, whose baying sounded more and more distant.

We followed him all day. He led us a chase of over five leagues, which we only abandoned at night. Bernard notified the keepers of Villers-Cotterets, and of all the neighboring forests, that if any one should kill a

boar without a tail, and wished to have him complete, they would find the missing tail in Bobino's button-hole.

While this hunt had been more amusing certainly than if it had entirely succeeded, it had not accomplished the object of the Inspector, who wished to kill rather than to maim the boars of the forest.

Therefore, as we separated for the night, the Inspector appointed another hunt for the next Thursday. This being a holiday, M. de Violaine again permitted me to make one of the party.

The rendezvous being fixed at St. Hubert's, we all arrived with military precision. Of course, every keeper asked Bobino if he had news of his wild boar; but except the tail, which he still preserved in his button-hole, he knew nothing more of it.

We had on this occasion three boars to attack, one in Bernard's district, one in Bertheline's, and the other in Mona's.

We commenced with Bertheline's, which was the nearest. The animal was soon roused, and as he crept forth from the covert, he was shot by Mildet, whose bullet pierced the beast's heart.

The second was in Bernard's district. He conducted us first, as was his custom, to his own house, where we had a cup of wine and a bit of bread, by way of refreshment.

Then the circle was formed, M. de Violaine keeping me, according to the promise which he had made to my mother, close to his side, between himself and his own keeper, Francis.

Bernard entered the covert with his blood-hound. Then the wild boar dashed out, grinding his tusks together with a formidable crunching. M. de Violaine, who was nearest to him, fired twice without touching him. I also fired: but failed, as a matter of course. Then Francis succeeded in putting a ball in him, which made him turn short upon us in a rage of pain and ferocity.

Francis fired again, as the animal reached the very

muzzle of his gun, and then the hunter and beast rolled over together on the ground. We heard a cry of distress, and saw Francis lying on his back, and the boar tearing him with his strong tusks. We were rushing to the rescue when a voice cried imperatively:

"Do not stir!"

Then we saw Mona taking careful aim at the animal. For an instant the hunter stood motionless, and then pulled the trigger. The beast, struck on the shoulder, rolled four paces away from the victim whom he had been trying to destroy.

"Thanks! old fellow!" said Francis, scrambling to his feet with difficulty. "If you ever have need of me, remember I am yours, in death or in life."

"It is nothing!" said Mona calmly.

We hastened to ascertain Francis's injuries. A severe wound in his arm was the worst. The boar's fierce thrusts had otherwise scarcely penetrated the hunter's stout clothing. Mona received our congratulations almost in silence. To the brave man, it seemed a simple and easy thing that he had done.

Then we examined the beast. Francis's two balls had but slightly wounded him; but Mona's had killed him outright.

Three or four years passed. I had left Villers-Cotterets, and returned to spend a few days there. It was December, and the ground was covered with snow. After embracing my mother, I hastened to M. de Violaine.

"Ah!" he cried, "you are just in time for a wolf-hunt, my boy!"

"I hoped so, when I saw the snow," I returned eagerly.

"Yes, we have heard of two wolves in Bernard's district, and I have given orders to hunt them to-morrow."

"And Bernard?—does he still kill wild boars as of old?"

"The boars are exterminated, I believe. I do not think there remains one in the whole forest."

"He is still a good keeper?—he will help us in our wolf-hunt?" I asked anxiously.

"You may depend on that!" said M. de Violaine, amused at my zeal.

"And the others?" I asked. "Mildet?"

"Still cuts squirrels in two with his ball."

"And Mona?"

"We were hunting yesterday in the marshes of Coyelles, and he shot seventeen snipe, without missing one."

"And Bobino?"

"He made a stew of his boar's tail for his dogs, and he swears that he will never rest in this world, or the next, till he puts his hand on the rest of the animal."

I left M. de Violaine to shake hands with all my old friends. One happiness of being born in a small place is that you know every one, and that each house has its own pleasant memory. I promised myself a delightful time in meeting all the keepers the next morning.

We met at six o'clock. It had snowed all night, and was horribly cold. Day commenced to break as we reached the rendezvous, and the fresh wolf-tracks in the snow were faintly visible.

We soon reached the point where Bernard was to meet us. There he was, and we hurried onward. A confusion of tracks soon surrounded us, and the barking of the wolves was heard in the distance. Suddenly several of the dogs dashed away to the left. As suddenly another scent seemed to float in from the right, for the pack separated. The hunters also separated, the majority of them turning to the left M. de Violaine, Bobino, and I found ourselves hurrying onward together toward the right, but disregarding the desertion of our comrades, we dashed forward after the dogs. At this moment, and utterly unexpectedly, a wild boar came plunging out of the woods, urged onward by the fierce attacks of the dogs.

"That's no wolf!" shouted M. de Violaine.

I stopped, disgusted. It was really a more remark-

able thing to have started up a boar than a wolf at this period, but having come forth for wolves, only wolves would satisfy us.

Not so Bobino. He was chasing desperately after the boar, and presently his gun rang out—once, twice. We hurried toward the sound, for some bushes now intervened between us. Imagine our astonishment to find our friend dancing up and down over the body of a dead boar—*a boar without a tail!*

"He is dead this time!" said the proud hunter.

We had to call the wolf-hunters in to witness his triumph, and the greatest dinner of the season was given a few days later to Bobino. Boar steak was the chief feature of the banquet.

The duel in "The Rivals," in which the redoubtable Bob Acres did *not* suffer, will be recalled by this very funny production of Jules Moinaux. It has been translated from the French for ROMANCE by Isabel Smithson.

THE RAMONET DUEL.

A SATIRE.

I.

THE manner of giving, says the poet, is of more importance than the gift. I think, however, that when the thing received is a blow on the face, the distinction is not likely to be appreciated by the recipients. This was Monsieur Ramonet's opinion—and he had had experience.

He was dining in a restaurant with his friends Peignot, Glousseux and Monpaté, and the first-named person had in the heat of argument struck him on the face. The proprietor of the restaurant, not wishing to have any disturbance, requested the party to adjourn to a small room up-stairs for the purpose of settling the difficulty.

Glousseux opened the discussion, saying sternly, "It seems to me, gentlemen, that my friend Ramonet cannot be expected to take a blow without demanding satisfaction."

"Or he might bring a suit for damages," said Monpaté, more mildly.

"Yes, of course!" cried Ramonet and Peignot, both evidently preferring the last-named measure.

"I shall speak of that later," said Glousseux—and a sigh of relief escaped the parties most concerned—"but we must first," he added, "ascertain whether Monsieur Peignot is willing to apologize to my friend Ramonet."

"I should accept," said the injured man timidly, but Peignot, thinking he alluded to twenty-five francs damages, exclaimed "Never!"

"Very well," said Glousseux briskly. "That being the case, we must now decide whether the assault constituted a *slap* or a *blow*, as there is a great difference between the two."

Peignot thought the difference might consist of a hundred francs in the way of damages, so he hastened to declare that it was merely a slap, while Ramonet remarked, "All I know about it, is that I saw stars."

"It is the law in affairs of honor," said Glousseux, "that a slap calls for a personal meeting, while a blow is merely the act of a boor and may be referred to the police for penalty."

Ramonet and Peignot, on hearing this, exclaimed simultaneously that it was a blow, but Glousseux begged them not to speak hastily, and then added:

"A blow with the fist produces a dull, solid thud, whereas a slap is sharp and resounding. Now I will leave it to Monpaté to say whether it sounded like *pouf!* or like *clack!*"

The gentleman appealed to replied that truth compelled him to say that he had heard *clack!*

"Besides that," said Glousseux triumphantly, "it is evident from the red mark on my friend's left cheek that it was a slap he received. We have now, gentlemen, nothing more to do but to arrange the details of the meeting. Monpaté, you and I are willing to act as seconds, are we not?"

Here Ramonet, evidently enlightened by the stars he had seen, opened his lips to suggest a compromise, but Monpaté interrupted him.

"Will you take us, or do you prefer to seek others? No? Very well, we accept the honor you offer us."

"And a grave responsibility it is," added Glousseux; "the lives of two fellow-creatures are concerned."

The seconds conversed in whispers for a few minutes, and then Glousseux remarked:

"Ramonet, you have the choice of arms, and I counsel you to select swords."

"At how many paces?" gasped Peignot.

"There is no question of paces," explained Monpaté.

"That is only when pistols are used. The sword is infinitely preferable, for it seldom kills, but always wounds."

"And in neither case renders the combatants ridiculous," added Glousseux. "I shall attend to the weapons, and Monpaté will engage the surgeon."

"The surgeon!" repeated Ramonet uneasily.

"Certainly, but you need not worry about anything —leave it all to us. You have nothing to do but to go to the appointed place at the appointed hour. Now, my friend, hold up your head, and walk proudly through that crowd of journalists down-stairs, and let those who witnessed the insult you received also see that you have exacted satisfaction as becomes a gentleman——"

"Could we not go out by the side-door?" asked Ramonet gloomily.

"Yes. I know the way. Follow me," said Peignot, and they escaped without returning to the dining-room.

II.

THE next morning at precisely half-past ten a carriage stopped at a short distance from the spot agreed upon, and the seconds alighted, followed by the physician; Glousseux carried the swords under his cloak.

After a short walk they reached the spot, and Dr. Rousselle, a jolly, round-faced person, said cheerily:

"At the watchman's cottage there is a well-stocked barn-yard, and an excellent fish-pond. I have been there before. While we wait, I will go and order dinner. Do you like duck?"

"Very much," said Glousseux, "but suppose they arrive while you are gone."

"The ducks?"

"No, our principals."

"They can begin without me. Do you prefer them roasted or fricasseed? How would eels go, with onions? Do you like eels?"

"I adore them," said Monpaté, "but you can hardly get back in time, and you will certainly be needed."

"Do you apprehend serious consequences?" asked the doctor in surprise. "Are the combatants very fiery?"

"Hardly that," replied Glousseux slowly, "but my principal is a man of honor——"

"And mine is full of pluck," added Monpaté.

"Very well! Fish, eels à la matelotte, roast duck," said the doctor. "I shall not be gone long," and he hurried away.

The hour fixed for the arrival of the principals approached.

"Your watch is fast," said Glousseux, and after waiting a little he announced: "In five minutes they will be here," but they were not.

Glousseux paced up and down, impatiently, and Monpaté smoked a cigar in sullen silence. Ten minutes passed, fifteen, twenty-five, and yet the combatants did not come. Glousseux looked at his watch, held it up to Monpaté, and said in a slightly ironical tone:

"Your man has not arrived!"

"Nor yours," retorted the other.

"He has been detained, that is all. Be quite sure he will explain satisfactorily."

"So will mine."

"It is hardly probable that both should meet with a delay," muttered Glousseux.

"Very true, but why not Monsieur Peignot?"

"And why not Monsieur Ramonet?"

"How do I know that he intended to come at all?"

"Sir? I can answer for my friend's honor."

"But not for his courage! Very likely he is now seated in his arm-chair at home."

"And where is your friend, may I ask?"

"Your tone is insulting, Sir, and I do not brook insults any more than my client does."

"If you are not more ready to resent them than he is——"

"Monsieur Monpaté, it is enough. I demand satisfaction."

"Certainly, you shall have it—whenever you wish."

"I wish it now!"

The next instant they had thrown off their coats, seized the swords, and begun to fight. Just then Ramonet and Piegnot appeared on the scene. They were walking arm-in-arm, and conversing cheerfully, and when they caught sight of the combatants, they exclaimed in surprise,

"Stop! Stop!"

At the same moment Dr. Rousselle arrived, breathless but radiant,

"It will be delicious," he began, and then added in dismay, "So they have begun it without waiting for me!"

"Stop them!" cried Ramonet and Peignot, and the combatants, hearing them, left off brandishing the swords.

"Ah, here is the man you suspected of cowardice," cried Glousseux, and Ramonet exclaimed, "Absurd," with an air of great dignity.

"Here is he whose honor you assailed," said Monpaté.

"He was speaking in jest," observed Peignot calmly.

The two seconds looked at each other for a minute and burst into a peal of laughter.

"What is the use of our fighting with each other in defence of these two cowards?" cried Glousseux.

"Permit me——" began Peignot, but Monpaté interrupted him with:

"I will permit you to do nothing except pay for the dinner."

"The ducks are roasting, and the matelotte is excellent," said the doctor. "Come, let us go, or everything will be spoiled. Everybody's honor is vindicated, I am sure."

"Ernest, are you satisfied?" asked Ramonet,

"Perfectly so, Alfred," was Peignot's reply.

Then the whole party shook hands and went off in high spirits.

It is not a new idea that an obdurate maiden may be made to repent by picturing distant horrors to which her desperate lover imagines that he is about to expose himself: but it is made to seem as fresh and amusing in this clever sketch from *Punch* as though it had never been used before.

LATE AT DINNER.

IN THE HALL.

GUEST discovered removing coat and hat, which are taken by a man with a reproving eye, amidst a grieved silence.

Butler (to subordinates, in ghostly whisper)—Tell 'em they can send up as soon as they please—now.

The Guest (himself on the stairs)—I am the last man then? Kept them all waiting, too, I shouldn't wonder. . . . I don't care—they shouldn't ask a man to dine out the very evening he's been (catching sight of himself in the mirror)—Jove! I mustn't go in looking like that, though—or they'll see what's the matter!

(Assumes a jaunty smile.)

IN THE DRAWING-ROOM.

Chorus of Starving Guests (in undertone)—Too bad, you know—can't understand it! . . . No one has any right to do this sort of thing—don't care who he is! . . . Generally so punctual here. . . . I make it a rule—never wait over five minutes past the hour for any one. . . . Quite right, too, etc., etc.

Butler—Mr. St. John Brentwing.

(Enter last Guest under concentrated glare from surrounding eyes, which he seems rather to enjoy than otherwise.)

Hostess (with implied reproach)—I began to be quite afraid something had happened to you.

(Mr. B. thinks that she is not far wrong, and mumbles apologies.)

Butler (reappearing after a moment's pause outside the door)—Dinner is served.

Hostess (to Mr. B.)—Let me see—do you know Miss Flambowe?

Mr. B. (who has been rejected by the young lady in question that very afternoon)—I—ah—do know Miss Flambowe.

(Adds "at last!" to himself bitterly and feels better.)

Hostess—Then I want you to take her in, please. You won't mind being close to the fire?

(Mr. B. thinks he has been very close to the fire already.)

A Paternal Old Gentleman—A most charming young lady—I congratulate you, sir—char-ming!

Mr. B. (advancing to Miss Flambowe with elaborate indifference)—I believe I'm to take you in.

Miss F. (looking down, and hoping he doesn't mean to be "silly")—I believe you are.

ON THE STAIRS.

Mr. B. (thinking he'd better say something)—Have you been out at all to-day?

Miss F.—Only in the morning—such a wretched day, hasn't it been?

(Wishes she'd said something else.)

Mr. B.—Has it? Well, it was rather a dismal afternoon, now I come to think of it.

Miss F. (deciding to take this literally)—Oh, very—but, after all, one must expect a little unpleasantness just at this time of the year, mustn't one?

Mr. B.—Oh, yes—you can get used to anything if you only make up your mind to it.

(Thinks he is carrying it off rather well.)

AT THE DINNER-TABLE.

Miss F.—How prettily the table's arranged, isn't it? —though I never quite like to see flowers strewn carelessly about, do you? I mean, it seems such a pity, you know.

Mr. B. (with a feeble attempt to be cynical)—Oh, I don't suppose they mind much, after they're once plucked—sooner they get the end over, the better for them, I should think. (Is afraid he has gone too far.) Aren't you taking turbot? You should—it's capital!

(Swallows some mouthfuls with an effort.)

Miss F.—I'm glad you're enjoying it. (She crumbles her bread.)

Mr. B.—I had no luncheon this morning, you see—and so (lays down his knife and fork) that gives a fellow an appetite, you know. (To footman, who says "sherry or 'ock, sir?") Hock.

Miss F. (to herself)—I don't believe he minds a bit—and yet, he hasn't finished his fish, after all!

Mr. B. (in answer to his other neighbor)—Well, no, there isn't much doing just now. I've been meaning to get away for a long time—go abroad and rough it a bit, don't you know. (He has raised his voice unconsciously for benefit of Miss F.) Start next week at the latest, I hope.

Miss F. (absently, to her other neighbor, who is telling her a funny story about Sydney Smith)—How very interesting—and you saw that yourself!

(The neighbor puts her down mentally as a pretty idiot.)

Miss F. (to Mr. B.)—Did I hear you say you were going abroad just now—where did you think of going?

Mr. B. (who has only just thought of it)—Well, I shall run over to the Rockies and shoot grizzlies.

Miss F.—Do you think you could lower that candle-shade a little? Thanks. Shoot grizzlies? You will like that, won't you?

Mr. B.—Immensely. (To footman.) Champagne, please.

Miss F.—I suppose you have friends out there?

Mr. B.—I had a friend who went out some time ago.

Miss F.—And you are going to join him?

Mr. B. (carelessly)—Shouldn't be surprised if I did—sooner or later.

Miss F.—Is he settled out there, then?

Mr. B.—Settled? oh, yes—he's settled.

Miss F.—And he likes the country?

Mr. B.—He wasn't there long enough to tell—fell down a cliff, or something, and was killed, out shooting, poor chap!

Miss F. (after playing with an entrée)—I hope you'll be careful.

Mr. B.—I? oh, I shall be careful enough—one takes one's chance, you know. By the way, will you let me send you home a skin, if I have any luck with the grizzlies? . . . you'd rather I didn't? I suppose I oughtn't to have offered—I never know about these things—I must wait, then—till—till I hear news of you . . . were you looking for something?

Miss F.—Only a little water, please.

OVER THE CIGARETTES.

Host (to Mr. B.)—And how did you get on with that Miss Flambowe, eh, Brentwing? Nice girl, isn't she?

Mr. B.—Very.

(Helps himself to salted almonds—which he doesn't like.)

Host (confidentially)—Now that's a girl; now—a young fellow like you . . . chance for you . . . might do worse, eh?

Mr. B. (taking a cigarette and wishing his hand wouldn't shake so confoundedly)—Well, you see, sir—as to that (laughs awkwardly)—well, there are two sides to every question, aren't there?

Host—I tell you what, Brentwing, you young men are too selfish nowadays—you don't like to give up your clubs, and your chambers, and all your bachelor enjoyments—not if it's to marry the nicest girl in the world—that's what it is!

Mr. B. (laughing again unsteadily)—That's about the truth of it, sir—we're a poor lot!

UPSTAIRS.

The Hostess (to Miss F.)—And so you have met your neighbor before? He's quite a favorite of mine—only

he shouldn't come so late to dinner. I hope you found him amusing?

Miss F.—Oh, extremely—he's going to America, he says, to shoot bears, or something.

Hostess—He never said a word about it to me. What can he want to rush off like that for?

Miss F.—He didn't tell me that.

(She watches the door under her eyelashes, as the men enter; Mr. Brentwing engages in an animated conversation with a lively young lady at the other end of the room. The Paternal Old Gentleman comes up and entertains Miss Flambowe with elderly attentions for the rest of the evening, which she appears to appreciate highly.)

IN THE HALL.

Mr. B. (who by the merest accident has taken his leave the moment after Miss F.)—Are they getting you a cab?

(Coldly, to Miss F., whom he finds below.)

Miss F.—It's outside—I'm only waiting for my maid. Good-night—or I suppose I ought to say—Good-by?

Mr. B. (stiffly)—After this afternoon, I should imagine good-by was the only thing to say.

Miss F.—And you couldn't manage to come to see me just once—before you go away to your bears?

(Turns aside to arrange her hood.)

Mr. B.—I could, of course—only I don't exactly see what the good of it would be!

Miss F.—Of course you are the best judge of that—I only thought you might find it worth while, perhaps.

Mr. B.—Lucella! Do you mean. . . ?

Miss F. (as she gets into cab)—I mean that I don't always quite know what I do mean. Good-night.

Mr. B. (soliloquizing on pavement)—If I do, she'll only make a fool of me again. . . . I won't give her the chance . . . At least, I'll think over it.

(Walks home and thinks over it.)

This true story has been written for ROMANCE by Charles M. Skinner.

THAT CLAMMY HAND.

My family was in the country, so that I was alone in the house. On the night of the adventure herein related, I had locked the doors and lower windows carefully, read until I was drowsy and gone to bed at eleven o'clock, falling asleep almost immediately.

It must have been two o'clock when I awoke. The night was intensely dark and still, but as soon as my eyes were open, I was conscious of something wrong, something oppressive. A weight was upon me, and instinctively I made a movement to throw it off. The thing lying on my chest was a human hand!

What had happened? Had a burglar entered the house and complacently gone to sleep beside me? Had I been chloroformed, kidnapped, and carried to a strange place? I cautiously felt again and took up the hand. It did not move, and was cold and clammy. In surprise and apprehension I dropped it, and it fell back upon my loudly-beating heart like a piece of lead.

I was in bed with a corpse!

Coolness, now, above all things!

Yes, the doors must be safe. I remembered locking them. How had this person, this thing, come into the house? Had he come to rob it, been shot or injured, dragged himself to my side and died there? Had a murder been committed, and had the perpetrators, with fiendish audacity, dragged the body of their victim into my house and left it there? If so, was it done to throw suspicion on me?

The heavy shade of trees before the house favored such a deed, and they might have entered by a ladder at one of the upper windows, but why should the ghastly thing be brought to me? I had no enemy, so far as I knew. After all, was not this a nightmare? No. I

could descry the window, and there was the edge of a gilded picture-frame that caught a faint light from the street-lamp on the corner. I was wide awake, and a dead man was lying beside me.

It takes time to write this. It needed but a second to think it, and as I thought it, my blood began to chill with horror, and my hair to stir. Yet, was it safe to move? If a corpse had been brought into the house, perhaps it was a maniac who had done it. At that moment he might be lurking in a corner with knife or bludgeon, ready to take my life, too; and my only weapon was in another room.

I listened. Everything was as still as the tomb, except for the beating of my heart. Come what might, the situation was too dreadful to sustain. I grasped the dead hand, flung it off, heard it fall on the counterpane with a soft thud, and then gathered myself for a spring. Why! what had happened? Where was my right arm? I tried to rise on my right elbow, but could not do so. In placing the body there, had my arm been injured? Here was a complication, truly: a mystery beside me, and all means of solving it destroyed. I put my left hand to my right shoulder and felt slowly down the arm; I lifted it with my left hand, and on letting it go, it fell lifeless. Picking it up again, I found that the hand was cold and without feeling. By rubbing and shaking it I restored sensation and the power of movement. Then a light dawned on me. I reached over to the right: there was nobody else in the bed. I had been lying in such a position that my right elbow was cramped under me and the circulation had been checked, producing that temporary paralysis which we allude to when we say that our legs or arms are "asleep." The palsied forearm had fallen across my chest, had cooled in a draught from the open window, and when I lifted it, there was no feeling in it to apprise me that it belonged to me. Such, however, was the case. That dead, clammy hand was my own. I went to sleep again.

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25 cents a Number; $2.50 a Year.

The deliberate movement, the dreamy, mystical atmosphere, and the intense affection, which are the prime characteristics of German fiction, are all prominent in this striking sketch by Jean Paul Richter. It was translated for the New York *Evening Post*.

THE LUNATIC'S DREAM.

It had been the lot of Liuta, a maiden, poetess, sister, and bride-elect, to see all that were dear to her—two brothers and her lover—drawn into the flame of war.

Amid the fiery turmoil of all the senses and energies, and amid the prevailing intoxication of wrath, it is easy for a man to bear up under his wounds, oftentimes not felt till after they are received, or to die while many others are dying. But the home-staying mother, and the sister, and the sweetheart—all of them obliged to expose themselves, with eyes and limbs benumbed, to the arrows of adversity, expectant, yet without anticipation—far more agonizingly, unobserved and unremedied, do these bleed in every war. When impending Death, with his triumphal chariots and powder-wains, marches past their windows; when the martial music of the enemy sweeps, exulting, by; when the burnished weapons which are to transfix a beloved breast flash into moist eyes; and when at last one peal of hostile thunder responds to another, then is no far-off heart more blest than one which beats no more; then every bullet that glances aside from the heart which is loved pierces, from off the field of battle, the heart which loves; while time, in its total lapse, is simply one intermitting pang, which even victory, instead of removing, doubles. For every despatch, sealed black with blood, as it were, announces little but ineffable death. Should she who loves perchance refuse to see the despatches, still her night-dreams bring them to her, false or true, but, for the most part, ensanguined.

Liuta received night journals of this description

earlier than the day journals. Every dream slew a joy in her heart. After three sombre forebodings there came a realization. Her elder brother, though not killed, was dead. In her grief, however, she had still two hopes. But soon one of these was, in turn, extinguished. Her second brother, the companion-in-arms of her lover, perished on the field of battle, that veritable harvest-field of death, on which more than a scanty, sigh-fraught peace is seldom reaped.

Shutting within itself the blood of its wounds, the twice-stricken heart now sublimed it into burning poison.

"The third, too, is dead," said she. "Yes, he dies anew every night before my eyes. For all good things, and all bad, go by threes." Frenzy snatched her down into its vortex amidst its fury-spectres.

The peculiarity of Liuta's insanity was that, though she stole about unwontedly calm and languid while awake, yet in dreaming—itself a daily delirium—it was greatly intensified. Her groans, her laments, and the convulsions of her features during sleep, clearly betokened what terrific forms, one running into another, were reflected by her dreams from the floods which so deeply overspread her life. Like the night-violet, she awoke regularly at sunset, whether she had slept much or little. The night she spent in rehearsing to others, or even to herself, her hideous poetic visions. These, at that time, unfortunately projected their phantasmagorias far into the actual, and she beheld now her lover, and then her brothers, standing before her. That which especially tormented and bewildered her was that she could not weep for the third among her dead ones—her lover. Taking her stand before the mirror, she would contemplate, for hours together, her hot, dry eyes, hoping for a single refreshing tear. While dreaming she repeatedly cried out: "Only one tear, O God! Give but this to my eye, and then let it perish! Ah! I have indeed wept but twice."

But fate destined sweeter tears for Liuta. For her beloved Alexander returned, in full vigor, from the vol-

canic hearth of war, prepared to present and devote to her his life, now possessed as a trophy. But how was he to bring himself home, as real, to her distempered vision, to which he had so often before been illusively exhibited in mere counterfeit?

"She may, indeed," said her mother, "shriek out at the sight of him: 'I see my lover and one brother. Where, then, is the third?'" Her mother adduced as an argument the frightful story of the mad woman who constantly saw her lost friend, as one returned from death, sitting at table. Suddenly she exclaimed, when her friend was actually brought before her eyes, "There are two," and fell dead.

But the lover said: "One has to run risks, even in peace. Her dreams have only to be changed. And how? By music, which she used to love so well. Let her awake under the most favorable circumstances. I will contrive all. Then I will appear before her hand-in-hand with our own dear mother. Hitherto the unfortunate girl has been left to sleep and dream at her will. So no standing on trifles! By heaven, I understand her."

Her mother acquiesced in this well-meant scheme. Some hours before sunset, Liuta fell asleep. She was carried into a room which the western sky could fill with all its roses. In three apartments, which communicated one with another, flutes, harps, and a choir of voices were so disposed that, merely in consequence of their distances apart, they sounded, each, as if answering an echo. Their magic was to be allowed to act uninterruptedly; for it is precisely music that, by its pure and holy infinity, most readily resolves the infinity of our sorrows; and melody, in all ages, has subdued the ravenous monsters of madness and misery. The bedroom was decorated with flowers; butterflies were made to flutter to and fro; and nightingales without blended, of themselves, the exultations of their love with the human intonations. Only the mirrors were removed, as being the background and the receptacle of illusory presentments. Alexander intended, at sunset,

as soon as Liuta's manner and speech should give proof that her mind was somewhat composed, to take her mother by the hand as a warrant of reality, to present himself to her, and to declare that he still lived and loved.

When, speechless, but alive to sounds, she heard the first notes, she seemed, from the action of her hands, to motion away from her either these or something of which she was dreaming. A conflict then appeared in her pale, tearless features; pang after pang graved its furrow in her delicate beauty, and rioted among the lilies of her face. Once she said, "It is well with me that I weep," and wiped her eye. But there was no tear there. Her mother and her lover alone were weeping. At last, however, she cried out: "Oh, say that to me again, Alexander: 'Heal, heal, wounded soul!'" And then the hard storm-clouds dissolved into soft, warm rain, and tears overspread her countenance. But she did not move her hand to dry them away. And then she sang: "That I might stand on high, and sing with you!" But she was unconscious that she was singing.

When, by and by, the sun had gone down, she opened her eyes, and said, though she kept her hand closed: "Alexander, I hold thy hand in mine." He advanced quickly to her, and grasped one of her hands in his own, while her mother took her other hand; and he said: "Behold thy friend and thy mother, beloved one." She looked fixedly toward the evening glow, and afterward at the two before her; she listened to the flutes, wept freely, but with smiles, and then sank upon her lover, asking: "Is, then, the dream accomplished?" And then she sank upon her mother, and said: "I believe it is accomplished." "By Heaven!" exclaimed Alexander, divining the welcome reality.

When the first transports at her recovery were past, she recounted her wonderful dream, but begged that, during her recital of it, the music should pause; for she was, indeed, still ill; and music, now that she was awake, agitated her too profoundly.

She related as follows: "Dreams know neither place nor time. I have been among them. But how?

"Three streams from hell wound precipitously upward below the sun. And far beyond our firmament there stood a firmament all of black ether, swarming with fast-anchored worlds which had not yet been set in motion. They called it preëternity. It seemed to me as if, in the gloom, Misery and its spectre hovered round me, ever drawing nearer and nearer. Thither mounted our sun, wearing the mask of a fury; and behind it came the first quarter of the moon, simulating the crest of a serpent. Straightway flew and disported in the beams of morning creatures that were winged, and were to live but a day; and when the stars rose they sank down. I beheld the portal of eternity. A beautiful youth, whom, even from afar, I could not but love, advanced to it. They brought him the key of the portal. Forthwith he fell prostrate, turning into dust, and then entered eternity. And next came veritable great Death, seated on four tiny, gay-hued butterflies'-wings, proclaiming that he was on his elephant-hunt after worlds. But he threw sun after sun, as if they had been fruits, sheer down; and only their earths were reduced to dust as he passed along.

"Then, of a sudden, came my brothers. They did not greet me; but one of them said, very gravely: 'Dost thou hear nothing?' And I heard, as they rose from the ground, which was a teeming cemetery of the buried alive, a confused murmuring and intermingled groaning of counterfeit corpses; while above, on the mountains around, stood countless dwarfs, who laughed boisterously at the whole, and danced together blithesomely. 'Do look behind thee,' at last said my younger brother, quite indignant. And there was standing a host of phantoms; and they pledged me in sepulchral urns. Power of utterance they had none; they were awaiting the great ash-shower, upon which they were to write their thoughts legibly with their tongues.

"Then there glided among the unsubstantial phantoms the tall figure of a youth enveloped wholly in a

veil, even to his hands and feet; and he held a book. 'What time is it, friends?' asked the figure, with a sweet voice, of my brothers. 'All sun-dials have gone backward, and point to zero,' shouted a leaping dwarf on a far-off mountain. 'It is not true,' rejoined the figure; and the dwarf fell headlong from the mountain.

"'Thou poor heart,' then said the figure to me, as it were in the tones of a lute, 'thou hast now a grievous dream. But here I have the dream-book. Dreams ever betoken their contraries. Pray to God for the worst, and it will fare well with thee on awaking.' 'Ah, thou! Ah, thou! Surely I know thee,' I exclaimed. 'Name no names,' strictly enjoined the figure; 'else, all awakes, especially the Devil.'

"The phantoms seemed to vanish. My brothers, far away from me, on the peaks of crags, strode towards each other, but made no progress, slipping backwards, and most of the dwarfs were squelched.

"The figure and I labored heavily and more heavily in our gait. Immensity, or else nothingness, embraced and clutched through my life; and, with a sense of oppression, nay, more and more stifled, I wept back into my swelling heart.

"'I hear at last,' said the figure, 'the ill-boding Alpine horn of the grave; but thou dost not, as yet. O, excellent! Excellently dreamed, on the credit of the dream-book!' And its veil trailed, lengthening and widening on and on, around it.

"New-born children, with wreaths of poisonous flowers, were lying on the road. 'O, rich of promise!' said the figure. In a garden children were making music on wind-instruments; and the aged were compelled to dance to it, and into their graves, till one could distinguish there only their bobbing heads, and, last of all, nothing but corruption, which, as best it could, whirled away in dust.

"'Very well,' said the youthful figure to me; 'only thou dost not weep as I would have thee weep. Pray guide thyself more exactly by the dream-book. Something different and more perilous there would be in tears of joy.'

"After that, in a glen, we came on two tyrants, crowned with points of daggers, stretched at full length on the summits of opposite precipices, and engaged in amicable conference. But every word which they uttered became a living creature, and at once dropped down—now a wolf, now a tiger, now a toad, now a vulture. The heights on which the tyrants lay were transparent; and there burst from them veins of silver and veins of gold; and from these veins gushed blood and tears respectively. At last the tyrants shook hands, but with hands cut down to strange stumps. Those of one of them were the white hands of a white Moor; and those of the other were the dark hands of a blue-dyer.

"Then the youth drew me out of the gorge, saying: 'There it is.' And I beheld a black stage curtain, depending from heaven to earth, with a hell depicted artistically thereon. Around it storm-butterflies fluttered with an eager air, demanding peremptorily to be admitted. I, too, now heard the ill-boding Alpine horn of the grave; and the curtain was drawn up to the zenith.

"On a plain, immeasurable by the eye, there were standing in silence, face to face, two embattled hosts; but they were made up altogether of home-bound cripples from the victorious armies of the earth. They were all one-armed, one-eyed, and gaping with wounds. And through a thousand wounds in file I saw the stars shine distinctly. Now they commenced the so-called dumb battle with air-guns. One heard nothing; but form after form fell prostrate, and every one of them closed his own eyes with his own hands. From a charmingly luminous cloud an arm offered itself, as if for succor, but it was broken thrice, and dropped blood. The dotted stars were white flecks in the celestial tiger; and aloft, against the sun, stood the ancient basilisk, motionless, behind a veil of Isis. All looked up anxiously—for they were dying—as soon as he revealed himself and surveyed the world.

"Then, to my horror, appeared before me the prim-

eval Devil, a deaf mute. With the hideous noises of the dumb, and with their grotesque gesticulations, he in vain tormented himself to signify clearly to me unspeakable woes. To make himself understood, he continually beckoned up to the basilisk. At last, as I did not yet despair sufficiently, he reached out one claw, which lengthened and lengthened, and clutched the veiled dragon, to snatch the veil from its all-destroying eyes.

"'Now, Liuta, thou art set free; awake!' said the youth. And I dreamed that I awoke. In my illusory waking-state he was still beside me, but unveiled. For a long time I had recognized him. We were both standing on a gondola of crystal, which was moving through a sea of white tulips, as amidst waves. Two enormous butterflies' wings fluttered in lieu of sails; and notes of flutes wafted us onward over the flower-bells.

"'Is it I that am alive? Or is it thou that art?' I asked. 'Thou and I,' replied the youth; 'heal, heal, wounded soul!' 'Oh, say that again, and yet again,' I cried. He did so; but his accents plunged me into sweet, deep extinction—sweeter and sweeter, deeper and deeper. From the effects of his tones my eyes closed; but I saw him through my eyelids. I opened my eyes, which were suffused with tears of joy; but I saw him through the tears. I dried them. Then his look was a kiss to me.

"The heavens above us were bestarred entirely with white pearls; only the Gemini beamed more and more brilliantly and intensely, and finally looked at me with four familiar brotherly eyes, while a white aurora swept on before the moon. We flew; we glided on between islands; and I sang, as we flew: 'Had I a thousand hearts, had I a thousand lives, to one heart alone, to one life alone, would I devote them all.' And the youth looked at me and said: 'Oh, that I might take thy hand now! On the sea, however, this is forbidden us. Wait for the mainland.'

"We sped forward now between the Paradise Islands. On one of them abode roses; and they were solemniz-

ing a rose festival, and were sacrificing the thorns. On another of them nightingales were warbling, perched on branches consisting of flutes; and the flutes responded to them of themselves; and eagles were playing vigorously on lutes with their wings. On still another of the islands flowers bore sway; and lilies of the valley were leading children, and lilies were leading maidens. One island came which was filled with sighs of joy; but it swam past us of itself. Long white waves of roses heaved in its wake; red waves billowed to meet it; and finally it stopped, overarched like a rose-bower, in the midst of the sea.

"When we had passed a promontory, with everlasting snow made of lilies, suddenly a many-hued dew of radiance fell upon the entire sky.

"'Where, then, is the sun, withal?' asked I. 'In the breast,' said the youth, 'is the original sun. Mark how its sunflowers turn toward thy heart at night!' And the pansies upon his breast moved violently in keeping with the throbs of my heart.

"'Oh, how my flowers tremble in sympathy!' said the youth. 'Why, then, does thy heart tremble so much?' I replied. 'It trembles only like a chord which, by making itself invisible, prolongs its music when the hand of harmony has struck it firmly.' The youth then fixed his look on me strangely, yet suspiciously; and from his eye stole a tear. But, instead of falling, it rose to heaven, and dilated, and hung, transformed into a silvery cloudlet, in the empyrean.

"What did I behold aloft? All the clouds there rose up in human forms on the horizon, and stood, in the likeness of brides in white, against the sky; and, as it were, like images of Memnon, the brides, enveloped in a ruddy effulgence, all sang down to us and released my troubled heart. I exclaimed, 'Oh, if I might stand on high, share in the song, and with the other clouds, melt away into sunshine and into dew!' 'Oh, not so, Liuta,' said the youth. 'Rather, I pray thee, mark yonder that lofty shore of verdure, where I may touch thy hand.'

"Then there suddenly flew up, from the lofty shore, a lark, and, though in the azure of eternity, carolled its old song of earth. And now vanished the heavens and the islands. Then the lark sang our earthly spring-times, bygone and to come; and my heart glowed in the life of home; and the earliest joys came back again.

"And upon the shore whence the lark came rained an aroma of flowers, and out of the vista rose, with ever-increasing rapidity, a rainbow, beneath which stood, as if beneath a triumphal arch, the effigy of a majestic countenance. 'Dost not thou see,' said the youth, 'how the expanded plumage of the bird of paradise mounts higher, and how it darts forth humming-birds like sparks? Plunge after me into the sea of rose-oil, and hasten to the shore, before the mounting, glowing face of the bird of Eden shall strike us blind.'

"And I plunged after him; and we swam; and my tears of joy floated behind me in the rose-oil, glittering. When we landed on the shore, the rainbow was standing there, in the guise of a round sun, covering half the sky. Effulgence on effulgence overveiled the youth. But he clasped my hand, and I awoke. He was clasping my hand here."

This simple but touching little sketch has been translated for ROMANCE by Edwin Francis Edgett from the German of Marc Boyen.

MY FIRST PATIENT.

I HAD been in my new lodgings for a week. A week that had dragged itself along in an endless series of days, every one bringing to me the dreams and the hopes of an entire lifetime. Over the glass door of my neat little apartment the white door-plate with which it is customary to announce the office of a practicing physician had shone for a week. For the same length of time my little reception and consultation-room had waited with its dark curtains and straight-backed chairs for the patients who were to come to seek the advice and help of Dr. Max Erhardt. After all, I had no cause to wonder that my room remained so empty in the first days, for the neighborhood had first to get accustomed to my name, and to the fact that they could find good medical advice in their near vicinity. All this I said to myself comfortingly at that time. When by good fortune I should be able to heal only one patient, then the situation would quickly change. My reputation would increase, and soon the rush of people to my consultation-room would proclaim my success. I should soon go about in a pretty, little carriage, with a dark brown horse driven by a respectable coachman; then, indeed, then——

At last, a thought which completely overpowered me came into my mind. I was again in spirit with my Cousin Marie, who certainly would make the prettiest of doctor's wives that one could imagine. I loved my fair cousin. As a boy, I had shown her every little chivalrous service which in either house or garden is demanded of the stronger comrade. As a Junior in school, I had inscribed my first poem to her; and as Senior I had badly injured my voice, which was just then turning to baritone, by singing incessantly

of "the flaxen haired girl." When I returned home after passing the first examination, the first thing of all that the student noticed was that "the flaxen-haired girl" had come to love him as completely as he loved her, but neither said anything on that subject. My University period passed by. All the time I worked earnestly, and whenever I had undergone the tedious struggle of examinations victoriously, Marie's dear eyes seemed to express her lively interest in the successful accomplishment of all my endeavors. And when Cousin Marie, greeting me upon my return, said softly, "Herr Doctor Erhardt," I looked deep into her dear eyes, and said still more softly, "Frau Doctor Erhardt." Then I saw a bright blush come over her face, as she turned hastily toward the window-seat.

Now and then, during the next few days, I had opportunity to speak to Marie of all the castles in Spain which a young physician could build in his empty dwelling; but I dared not inform her of my dream in regard to the future doctor's wife. There lay in the blue eyes of my dearest an expression which kept back my words, even when they almost found utterance. I had no doubt but that Marie would eventually be my wife, but it seemed as if a lack of confidence in my ability as a physician lay in her glance. That increased my pride, and induced me to remain silent and await the time when the report of my first professional achievement would proclaim my ability to Marie.

With my thoughts absorbed in all these things, I sat on the afternoon of a dreary November day in my consultation-room, and at first failed to notice a faint ring at my bell. Then I arose to open the door myself, as I had sent my errand-boy to market.

I confess that, during the few steps which were necessary to bring me to the door, a flood of strange thoughts came over me. A caller was seeking my help. Very likely it was a patient of high birth, and I should certainly receive a rich reward and fame, and—I was already married to my dear Marie.

I opened the door. In the half-dark of the late

August day stood a poorly-clad woman before me. Out of her haggard and charcoal-blackened face looked a pair of great, dark eyes beseechingly at me.

"Doctor," said the woman in a trembling voice, "Doctor, be merciful, O please. My little Marie is so sick."

The name atoned for the woman's unpromising appearance, which coincided badly with my latest dreams.

"Who are you? Who sent you to me?" I asked.

"No one," the woman answered quickly and in a low voice. "O Doctor, do come! I have been carrying coal all day from the wagon into a house near by. I live over there in the courtyard. My child has been sick since yesterday. I found her so much worse that I came to you at once."

I hesitated somewhat; the disenchantment was so great.

The woman wiped her face with her blackened hand. It was a face which already showed many furrows caused by sorrow and trials.

"I should have gone for the charity-physician," she said, wearily, "but your servant, Doctor, is a child of the shoemaker in our courtyard, and he has told everyone that you are such a good man. Oh, do help my little girl!"

I decided to go with the woman. After all, one is a man, and most of all is he a man who has learned to do his duty. So I went with her, after I had gathered together the necessary instruments with a pomposity which astonished and half shamed even myself.

Across the street we took our course, into a great courtyard lying behind a row of houses. Then she led me up five flights of stairs, each one darker and steeper than the last, and finally through a badly-fitting door into a little room with slanting ceiling and very little windows. On a miserable but neatly-arranged bed lay a child of perhaps fourteen months. Her limbs were fever-heated, and her eyes were wandering and inexpressive.

The woman bent down to the bedside. "She does not know me! She does not know me!" she moaned.

The child coughed; it was a croupous cough of the worst sort. I tore a leaf from my book, and wrote my first prescription as a practicing physician.

"To the nearest apothecary," I said.

The woman looked at me, embarrassed.

"Can I take it to the one in the Königstrasse?" she said.

"No, no," I cried, "it requires the greatest haste; why will you not go to the apothecary in this street?"

The woman reddened perceptibly, in spite of the charcoal dust. Finally she stammered, "The apothecary in the Königstrasse knows me; I carry coal there, and he will perhaps— I have no money."

A heavy tear dropped on the paper in her hand.

"These people, who can pay no physician and no druggist," said I, angrily, but inaudibly. I took out some money, and said aloud, "There, take that, and go quickly."

The woman kissed the hand of her child, and then, before I could stop her, she kissed mine also, and hastened away. I looked around the room for a seat. A rickety chair, a red chest, an old table, some miserable dishes on a poor, cold oven, which occupied the place of a hearth, comprised all the furniture. Hanging on the wall in a corner was a threadbare woolen garment, and also a child's cloak and a little hat with a ribbon around it a finger's-breadth wide; on a bracket hanging next to the little window was a withered myrtle tree, a red geranium, and a hymn-book, with disgusting yellow edges. That was everything that the room held.

I sat down beside the little girl. She was apparently well cared for. Her limbs were round and pretty, her golden hair was soft and curly. She was unconscious; her blue eyes stared straight before her, as if she was looking into the far, unknown distance. The room was cold. I went to the oven and found only some splinters of wood.

There were so few that I did not attempt to build a

fire. I sat down and waited for the woman and the medicine. Ever and anon my glance would wander around the miserable room. Here was a poor, hard-working woman, who carried charcoal on the street, while her child lay in want and sickness, and yet she loved her baby tenderly.

Suddenly the thought shot through me that I could not save the child. I had been called too late. I had not resolution enough to try any doubtful energetic effort to save her, to snatch her from the arms of Death. My heart was heavy. I sprang to the door and listened for the footsteps of the mother. She came finally; my reproachful look met her downcast one. "There were so many people in the store. A woman like myself did not dare to press forward."

An hour of torment went by. The medicine availed nothing Little Marie could not swallow it. An operation on the throat was of no use. The child died, died before my eyes on the bosom of the mother, bowed down by her grief.

She finally looked up in a terrified manner; a tear had fallen on her hand, but *she* had not wept.

"You are weeping, Doctor," she said, softly. "Ah, don't weep, sir, you will stand before many a sick bed as you have stood here, where the Lord will not help."

She looked fixedly at the little corpse. "I have loved her very dearly. I have done for her what I could in my poverty. Whenever I came home from my work I found her so pretty, so charming! For hours she would lie in bed or on the floor and play with almost nothing, and she laughed for joy when I came home. God has taken her from me. He loves her more than I do, but, oh I shall be so lonesome!"

I pressed the woman's hand, but could not speak. I dropped some money on the table, and silently went out. At home I laid my instrument case away, and sat down disheartened. I could eat no supper. I went to bed and tried to get to sleep. But the picture of the gloomy attic, of the dead child, of the submissive

and patient woman, kept me less from sleep than the tormenting self-reproach with which I thought over everything that I had done. My first patient! I simply groaned, and then the words of the poor woman came to me again: "Don't weep, Doctor, you will stand before many a sick bed as you have stood here, where the Lord will not help."

I had been summoned too late; I had not been able to save the child. "You will stand before many a sick bed as you have stood here." I hid my face in the pillow. It was a terrible night; the torturing thoughts which made me so restless were very different from the pleasant dreams which had encouraged me in both my waking and my sleeping hours.

Early on the following day an old college friend came, who had sought me on his way through the city. He dragged me over the crowded streets, into the Museums, into all sorts of restaurants. He complained of my taciturnity. I feigned a headache and escaped the necessity of having to see a sensational play at the Court Theatre. Tired and worn out, I went at last alone to my room. On my way there I passed the window of a brightly-lighted flower-shop. I walked in and bought a costly, white camelia and some sweet-smelling violets. I went up the five flights to the room of the poor woman. I found the door unlocked. It was faintly lighted, and a little coffin stood in the middle of the room. In it lay the child, dressed in a white gown. The ribbon on the hat on the wall had been made into two little bows, the myrtle wreath lay on the blond hair, and the geranium was laid upon her breast. On the table stood a lamp, and the open song-book lay near by it.

I laid the beautiful white flowers in the little motionless hand, and put the bouquet of violets on the quiet breast; then I looked at the open book. The page was turned at an old song which I had learned at school, and had soon forgotten.

I laid the book away sighing. The words which I had read, the awful stillness, the peacefully-resting

child, oppressed my heart; I went home, after asking in the house for the hour of the interment.

I went to bed early. I was very tired, and all disquiet left me. And as if called forth by a strange power, the words of an ardent prayer flowed over my lips; the prayer that God might bless me in my difficult position, and might change my conceited assurance in my own skill into a submissive trust in His protection, whenever my little knowledge and my earnest wishes would not avail; that I might hope for God's comfort at all sick beds, where I must, as on yesterday, stand helpless.

Early in the morning, I awaited the little coffin in the courtyard. A man bore it; the mother in her poor, black clothing followed. She pressed my hand, and gave me a thankful look when she saw that I joined the little procession. The way was not long; the streets were almost empty; the air was very mild for November. As the iron gate of the burial-ground opened, the weeping woman dropped her head upon her breast. Beside the open grave stood a clergyman.

"I have made it my duty, as long as my strength lasts, to give a last blessing to all the dead of my parish," said he, softly, as my astonished look met his.

Dear, kind priest, you did not suspect how the plain, homely words of blessing which you spoke over the little coffin gave comfort to the poor woman, and to myself as well!

"In God's hand everlasting rest is found."

"I know it, I know it," sobbed the woman, and she bent her pale face over the hand of the young priest.

On the evening of the same day, I went to my relatives. All the older members of the family were absent. Only Cousin Marie was at home to receive me. We sat at the window and let the moonlight shine upon us, and then I told her how I had visited my first patient and what I had learned thereby of value to my calling. Marie said nothing during my confession, but suddenly I felt myself embraced by her arms. She looked at me with moist eyes.

"Look, Max!" she said. "Now you know well in what respect you failed in your profession. Thank God that you have gained this knowledge through your first patient! Now I think that you will become an able physician, who will always do good, even when his own skill shall not avail."

I kissed my cousin.

"And now, what do you mean?" I said. "Have you the courage to become the wife of such a doctor?"

She smiled in the midst of her tears, and we were betrothed at last.

Fortune willed it that on the next day I should again be called to attend a child, who was very sick with the croup. I was also fortunate enough to be able to save it. Much grace has God since then allowed to be bestowed through my hands to the sick and the poverty-stricken. My profession became dearer and dearer to me. The mother of the child who had been my first patient soon moved into my house to attend to the management of the household until my dearest one became my wife. She then stayed with us as cook, until later she became nurse to our first-born daughter, Marie. She wept over the child for joy, and in thankful remembrance of the little blonde girl who had shown me what it is to be a physician.

The following powerful and original story has been translated for ROMANCE by S. E. Boggs. Its author is Hugo Klein.

HIS EXCELLENCY, THE FOOL.

HA, ha, ha! Ho, ho, ho! Even the king laughed until the tears ran down his cheeks; while his courtiers, from the general in command of his majesty's troops, down to little Biberitz, the dullest page that ever carried lady's train, echoed their sovereign's hilarity. Little Biberitz's merriment, indeed, at last became so uproarious that his royal master turned suddenly, and flashed a glance of disapproval upon the forward lad. What? this little dullard presume to ridicule the scholar, who had donned the harlequin-dress at the command of his sovereign!

And what had caused all this merriment?

Some one had played a mischievous trick on "His Excellency, the Fool"—otherwise Baron Paul von Gundling—whose costume was, in truth, a singular one, even for a court fool. He wore black satin knee-breeches and a coat adorned with enormous gilt buttons; a black hat with long scarlet plumes; scarlet stockings clocked with gold; and black slippers with scarlet heels. At the same moment that he had entered the audience-hall, there had appeared from an opposite door a diminutive ape, clad in a costume exactly like that worn by the baron.

The little creature, which evidently had been well trained for the comedy, approached the king, bowed deferentially, and presented a petition. One of the courtiers took the paper, and with feigned gravity read the contents aloud to the assembled company.

In his petition the ape stated that he was the only son and heir of Baron von Gundling, who cruelly and persistently refused to acknowledge or support his child. The ill-treated child, therefore, humbly begged his

gracious majesty's aid in securing his legal rights, as well as kindly recognition from his lawful parent.

The laughing courtiers surrounded von Gundling, and overwhelmed him with reproaches for his cruelty to his son and heir. The scene was very amusing, and his majesty was greatly entertained. Even "His Excellency, the Fool" himself joined in the boisterous hilarity—he had enough sense left to feel that to resent the insult would only incite his tormentors to fresh ridicule. He stooped, lifted the monkey in his arms, caressingly tapped its hairy cheek, and said, turning toward the king: "Not acknowledge this dear child, your majesty! Why, only see how beastly fond I am of the little rascal!"

But his majesty had had enough of the rude sport; he turned on his heel, and quitted the audience chamber, followed by his laughing suite, who were eager to repeat throughout the capital the latest joke on "His Excellency, the Fool."

The echo of their voices yet resounded in the corridor when von Gundling flung the ape from him, with a fury so violent that the poor little beast uttered sharp cries of pain and terror, as it limped from the room.

Then the so-called "fool" threw himself into a chair and covered his face with both hands, while bitter sobs of anger and grief burst from his tortured heart. Suddenly a hand was laid on his shoulder, and a grave voice pronounced his name: "Paul!"

The fool lifted his head, and turned inquiringly toward the speaker.

"Ah! is it you, brother-in-law?" he exclaimed with a half-suppressed sob.

"Yes, Paul—come with me. I want to talk with you."

The baron nodded, and rose to his feet. He knew very well what would be the subject of their conversation; but in his sober moments he was always ready to hear disparaging comments on the ignoble rôle he was compelled to play in the gay court.

Always in his sober moments he felt the bitterest humiliation; and he now longed to pour out his heart to this friend, who had witnessed the degrading scene with the ape.

Herr von Ilgen led the way to his room in another wing of the palace. It was an airy, comfortable apartment, whose windows were shaded by verdant branches; cool and restful.

Von Gundling, at his brother-in-law's invitation, seated himself in a chair near one of the open windows. Herr von Ilgen did not at once begin the conversation, but thoughtfully paced the floor for several moments, from time to time casting a searching glance toward the silent man near the window.

"Paul," he began at last, halting beside his brother-in-law; "what terrible misfortune brought you—*you*, once the ornament of the University—to such a pass?"

"Are you really curious to hear my story, Ilgen? It is a fool's history—but an instructive one for all that," he added with sudden bitterness.

"I do not ask out of mere curiosity, brother," returned Herr von Ilgen, laying his hand on Paul's shoulder, "but out of affectionate, brotherly regard and sympathy. When one sees a valued friend in a situation like yours, one's first desire is, naturally, to help, if possible. Whatever may have been the cause that brought you to a position so unworthy of your attainments, I am ready and willing to do all in my power to rescue you—I swear it, Paul, my friend and brother!"

The baron shook his head hopelessly.

"That is not so easy a task as you imagine, my friend. The evil is too firmly rooted. The devil of the wine-cup has too firm a hold on me. My degradation began in Berlin. You remember what a sensation there was when I was appointed a professor in the University at Halle? I was very young for so important a position; but the king, who was my patron, had confidence in my ability to perform the work. You know how zealously I devoted myself to my profession? I was anxious to prove that I was worthy of my sovereign's con-

fidence. I won many friends. A brilliant future lay before me. Then came the turning-point of my life."

He paused abruptly, drew a long sigh, and remained for several moments buried in gloomy meditation.

"You have no idea how very beautiful she is!" after a while he went on, pursuing aloud his train of thought. "Picture to yourself a slender, lissome form, with the majestic bearing of a queen; a pale, pure face, with a pair of dark eyes that can enchant you with a smile, and freeze you with their hauteur. I never saw a more attractive woman; and I shall never see another the mere sight of whom will have such power over my very soul!"

"Who is she?" abruptly inquired Herr von Ilgen.

Paul looked up in surprise.

"You don't know her?" he exclaimed. "Ah, then you will hardly understand my story. She is the daughter of the distinguished historian, Monsieur de Larrey. He came to Halle to examine some ancient manuscripts in the possession of the University; and during the three months he was absorbed in his work he left me to entertain his daughter, who had accompanied him.

"It may seem strange to you that Monsieur de Larrey was willing to trust his daughter to the intimate companionship of an entire stranger; but if you were acquainted with Jeanne de Larrey, you would understand that her father ran no risk in trusting her in any society. There is about her an indescribable something that renders her as unapproachable as an iceberg—a hauteur that repels all familiarity. She is a perfect woman of the world. She is accustomed to the society of the most distinguished men and women of our age. She has traveled everywhere. She speaks fluently a dozen languages; she can repeat in the most faultless original whole pages of Homer. The world I had learned to know amid my studies was not peopled with such women; nor were those with whom I associated in any way like Jeanne de Larrey."

"You must have fallen very deeply in love with

her," observed Herr von Ilgen, when Paul stopped to draw another long breath.

"Must have fallen in love with her," slowly repeated the baron. "Yes, but the feeling that took possession of me was very different from the sentiment usually called love. I loved—nay, love her for all my life. She is a coquette. Coquetry, you know, is a part of woman's nature, as deceit is of man's. The confidential manner she adopted toward me, from the very first day we met, allowed me no confidences in return. She would tell me about her lovers—about a certain English baronet who was enamoured of her—and arouse my most jealous fears. In short, her smiles made me happy; her hauteur cast me into the depths of despair.

"There were days when I could have put a bullet into my brain, so hopeless seemed my existence. Don't —don't laugh at me! Then again I would be supremely happy, for I would imagine that she was not indifferent to me. More than once, when I came upon her unawares, I detected the faint color which rose for an instant to her cheeks; and once, her hand trembled on my arm when I ventured to press it gently against my side. But I felt all the time that there was no hope for me. Even if she loved me, her pride would never allow her heart to decide in my favor."

"Did you never tell her you loved her?" asked von Ilgen.

"Yes; at least, I gave her to understand that I adored her. We used to take long rambles into the country. We explored the valley of the Saale, and visited every place of interest in the neighborhood. I repeated for her entertainment all the local traditions and legends; explained the manners and customs of each district, and quoted the songs and sayings of olden times. One day, in order to obtain an unobstructed view of the surrounding country, we made the ascent of Petersberg. We two were alone on that romantic height—removed from all the world. An exalted feeling took possession of me. I seemed to belong to a different race. The loneliness of the forest environed us. The leaves,

stirred by a gentle breeze, rustled softly about us. It was a fitting time and place for a tender avowal. I directed my companion's attention to the ruined castle on the mountain-side, and told her the history of the last owner, a Baron von Gelge—how his only daughter, who was a lady-in-waiting to the queen of Augustus the Strong, lost her heart to the valiant leader of the six hundred miners, who had deserted their labor in the salt-mines to join the king's standard. I pictured in glowing colors the bravery of the blouse-wearer in armor, Klaus Waldeman; how he became a great favorite at court; how at one of the festivities at the palace he became acquainted with the beautiful Rosamund von Gelge, who very soon forgot the difference between her station and that of the plebeian soldier. I told Jeanne how Klaus Waldeman adored his high-born sweetheart; how their passion was celebrated in verse and song; how, one day, the pair eloped, and were pursued by the old baron's servants, who, when they overtook the lovers, killed the brave Klaus, and brought Rosamund back to the castle; and how the poor girl, who was crazed with grief for her murdered lover, flung herself into the stream which flows at the foot of the steep hill.

"'She must have been a very weak-minded girl,' calmly interrupted Jeanne, with a scornful curl of her lip.

"'A weak-minded girl, mademoiselle?' I repeated with a sinking heart. 'Do you call it weak-minded to follow the dictates of one's heart? Do you really think Rosamund was weak-minded because she chose not to live without her beloved?'

"'Yes,' in the same scornful tone, replied Jeanne.

"'Then,' said I, 'suppose some one, not so rich, nor so distinguished as yourself, mademoiselle—some one, who had nothing to offer you but his boundless love—suppose he were to sue for your hand, what would you reply?'

"For an instant her gaze rested dreamily on the distant forest, and a tender smile played around her lips.

Then a mocking light flashed into her eyes. She turned them full on me, and, pointing toward the old state-prison on the opposite hill, said coolly:

"'I should reply: "Better shut yourself in yonder madman's tower, Herr Doctor.'"

"I questioned no further—she had understood me, and given me her answer.

"In silence we retraced our steps to the city. Neither of us spoke again until we reached the paved streets. I felt as if a world had been annihilated. Just before leaving her at the door of her lodgings, I summoned courage to say:

"'Were you in earnest, mademoiselle?'

"'About Rosamund?' she asked lightly.

"'Yes.'

"'Certainly I was in earnest. If Rosamund had been a clever, sensible girl, she might have spared herself and her Klaus all the misery that overtook them. I know,' she added in a gentler tone, 'that it is difficult *at all times* to be strong and wise; but Rosamund could have been so had she only *willed* to be so. That is all I have to say on the subject, Herr Doctor—farewell!'"

"I did not see her again."

He ceased, overpowered by painful recollections.

After a pause Herr von Ilgen said:

"What happened afterward?"

"What happened?" Paul laughed harshly. "The rest is easily told. Jeanne was able to control her heart, but I—I was not so strong. I made illness an excuse for not calling again upon her, and soon afterward her father completed his work, and they left the city. M. de Larrey came to bid me good-bye. He found me really ill and suffering. Jeanne sent me a few cool lines of farewell. Here is the letter," taking from his breast pocket a worn, faded paper and extending it toward his brother, who refused, with a gesture of repugnance, to take it.

"I was very ill for several months," resumed Paul, carefully returning the letter to his breast. "I sought forgetfulness in study. My illustrious patron appointed

me professor of history in the academy which he had founded for the sons of noblemen. Perhaps hard work would, in the end, have cured my disappointment; but the king died, and his favorite academy was closed. His successor took me into his service; conferred on me the patent of nobility; and gave me the post of chamberlain. My sole task now was to entertain his majesty at dinner, and evenings when state affairs did not occupy him. It was an easy position; but for me a most unfortunate one. I led the life of an idler. I had too much time to think. There was no work to drive torturing thoughts from my brain. One day at dinner I happened to take too much wine. I was surprised to find what a singular effect it had upon me. It made me *forget!* I was gay, cheerful. All trouble had vanished from my heart. That is how I became a drunkard! Spare me, dear friend, a further recital of my shameful downfall. I became a willing tippler, because wine brought oblivion; but it changed the once dignified professor into a buffoon, a clown. The king once in jest called me 'His Excellency, the Fool,' and the name clung to me. I am now what you see: a miserable sot—the court fool, the sport, the jest, of every blackguard who chooses to mock me. Last week they had this costume made for me, and I wear it by his majesty's order!"——

"Shameful! Atrocious!" indignantly interposed Herr Ilgen's voice. "I shall take it upon myself to punish the miscreants who dare to——"

"No, no!" interrupted Paul. "Why should you? They do only what my conduct gives them the right to do. Can I ask them to respect me when I have no respect for myself? I deserve their ridicule, and find consolation in the wine-cup. My fate is sealed. I have neither the strength nor the desire to change my mode of existence. My ambition, my hopes, my love —all lie buried on Petersberg. Let me go my way, brother. Let me drink—and forget!"

Herr von Ilgen found that further remonstrance was useless. He determined, however, that the diplomatic

errand which had brought him to Potsdam should also prove his brother-in-law's salvation.

A few days later, Baron von Gundling heard, while at an entertainment at the palace, a piece of news that affected him deeply. The French historian M. de Larrey—so it was said—and his daughter, the celebrated beauty, had arrived in Potsdam, and were to be presented at court. This intelligence filled the poor court fool's heart with renewed bitterness. Although he still longed to behold once more the fair face which had so enslaved his soul, he felt that he must forego the painful pleasure. Consequently, on the day M. de Larrey and his daughter were expected at court, "His Excellency, the Fool" drank so deeply of the cup which gave him oblivion that he had to be carried to bed, and eighteen hours passed before he roused from his drunken stupor. When he became quite himself again, Herr von Ilgen appeared before him, and said:

"Paul, I want you to go somewhere with me, but not in that buffoon's toggery. Put on your black clothes."

Without a question or a demur, the baron obeyed.

They drove to the Holland quarter of the city, where the carriage stopped in front of a handsome villa. They rang, and were admitted by a servant in livery, who conducted them to a lofty reception-hall.

In a few moments, the soft rustle of feminine garments was heard approaching, and before von Gundling could realize what had happened, Jeanne de Larrey, more beautiful, more majestic than ever, stood before him.

A mist suddenly obscured the court fool's vision—the meeting was so unexpected, so unhoped-for! His self-command utterly deserted him; his throat seemed compressed by a band of steel. Without a word, he bent over the hand she extended in cordial greeting toward him, and covered it with tears and kisses.

"Are you really so glad to see me again, professor?" she asked smilingly, but with a tremor in her tones.

He merely bowed. He was not yet able to command his voice.

"And yet you have no word of greeting for me!" she added gayly.

"How beautiful—you are—mademoiselle!" he stammered confusedly, unable to say more.

"What! you are become a flatterer! You, the grave professor, have learned court manners? But come, let us sit down, and chat together as we used to at Halle. Since then, I have traveled in many countries, and can tell you much that will interest you. But, first tell me about yourself? What have you been doing all these months? Are you still angry with me? And how did you manage to forget me so entirely?"

The half-jesting, half-earnest question suddenly brought the bewildered court fool to a consciousness of his situation. He turned as if to seek for help from his brother-in-law, but that wily diplomat had retired.

"Where is my brother-in-law?" asked Paul helplessly.

"He is probably with my father, with whom he has business of importance," replied Jeanne.

Ah, now he understood why his brother had brought him here! He was to be lectured by this haughty beauty. His face darkened; he drew his brows threateningly together. This poor sot who permitted all the world to humiliate him, would not submit to one word of reproach from the woman he adored.

Jeanne noted the change in his manner, and fearing that she had too soon touched upon a painful subject, hastened to add:

"My father will be delighted to see you. He has not forgotten how kind you were to us."

But Paul paid no attention to these words. Instead, he said slowly, fixing his eyes on her face; "How did I manage to forget you, Mademoiselle? I managed it admirably. I became the court fool."

Jeanne grew pale, and trembled—not at his words, for she had heard of his downfall. It was his tone, his glance, that frightened her.

"And that is not all, Mademoiselle de Larrey," he continued. "You shall hear more, since you are interested in my fate. I am a drunkard, a sot, who is happy

only with a full bottle; a creature that wallows in the mire of disgrace. Ah, turn in abhorrence and disgust from one so utterly vile! I do not blame you. I am a low, vulgar buffoon, not fit to breathe the same atmosphere with one so pure and proud as you!"

"Herr von Gundling!" she gasped in a beseeching tone,—but a harsh, grating laugh interrupted her.

"Rejoice, Mademoiselle, rejoice at your work,—*your* work. Do you hear? I have fallen very low indeed; but it was to forget you that I lost my wits in wine. There are moments when I am bitterly ashamed of my degradation; but what must you feel, proud girl! You, who have ruined a life that was not meant to end in the gutter? I know very well that the rose is innocent when her fragrance intoxicates the butterfly; that the star cannot help it if her brilliance dazzles mortal eyes. Nor are you, Mademoiselle, to blame that your rare loveliness enchanted my soul. No, you are not to blame for winning my love, but that you loved me, and allowed your pride to scorn my love,—for that I blame you. Don't turn away, don't hide your face, Mademoiselle. You cannot deny it. You loved me! Your heart beat for me! Your blushes betrayed your secret! *You loved me!* You succeeded once in quieting the voice of your heart. Will you hereafter be able to silence your conscience? Answer me, Mademoiselle de Larrey?"

All the bitterness, all the misery, that had accumulated for years in his sore heart, rushed, an overwhelming flood, from his lips in this passionate accusation.

Pale, silent, and trembling, Jeanne waited until he had concluded. Then, unable longer to control herself, she buried her face in her hands and burst into tears. Convulsive sobs shook her form, while the tears streamed from between her fingers and ran down her delicate wrists.

At this outburst of long-suppressed feeling Paul's anger suddenly vanished, like the frost beneath the warm spring showers. All his own suffering was forgotten. He flung himself on his knees at her feet,

drew down her hands and covered them with passionate kisses.

"Forgive—forgive—Jeanne!" he murmured, with quivering lips, and burning eyes. "I am so unutterably wretched I know not what I say,—so guilty that, unable to bear my guilt alone, I seek to cast it on every one who comes in my way. Jeanne—Jeanne—say that you forgive me?"

"Forgive you?" sobbed Jeanne, bending toward him, and laying her hands on his shoulders. "Forgive *me*, Paul. I deserve your reproaches, your accusations; but believe me, I do bitterly regret my miserable pride. My life has not been happier than your own, for I could not forget either. But I am here to atone for my folly. I rejected your love when you offered it to me. Will you in turn refuse mine? Look up, Paul, dear Paul!—for this alone I came here. I want to be your wife."

He looked at her in a dazed, bewildered manner, as if unable to comprehend her words; then, a gleam of happiness flashed into his eyes, only to be succeeded the next instant by deepest gloom.

"No—no, Jeanne; it is too late," he said mournfully. "I love you too dearly to destroy you. You must not become the wife of the despised court fool. You must marry the proud, high-born Englishman who, you once told me, was your suitor."

"I have done with his lordship," returned Jeanne, smiling through her tears. "I found that I could not be happy with him, loving you as I do. It was from him I learned of your disgrace—and only then I learned how dearly I loved you. The baronet's scornful comments on the 'learned court fool' stung me to the quick, and I replied: 'Sir, be careful what you say about the gentleman whom it pleases you to call the court fool. I am his betrothed wife.' I told a lie, Paul, but I hoped you would forgive me for it, and not punish me by refusing to make good my bold assertion. You will not, will you, dear Paul?"

"O Jeanne!" cried von Gundling, in an agony of re-

morse; "believe me, it is too late. You do not know what you ask,—how contemptible, how degraded is my lot."

"Lift yourself above it!" exclaimed Jeanne, with sparkling eyes. "Quit this court, where you have been so dishonored, and come with me to another land, where we will begin a new life."

"I cannot, I cannot! The king will not allow his clown to leave him. The court needs a buffoon for its pastime. Once, in an hour of remorse and repentance, I made my escape; but the king's soldiers overtook me. They offered me increased wages if I would return willingly, and a sound flogging if I refused. I had no choice. I was compelled to come back to my shame."

"Then," responded Jeanne, rising to her feet, and proudly drawing herself to her full height, "Then I shall become the wife of the court fool and try to help him bear his shame. It may lighten his burden! When they mock and despise you, Paul, you shall ever find a heart ready to comfort you. Your wife will ever be at hand to smooth the shame from your brow,—to kiss from your lips all the bitterness in your heart. Here, Paul, here is my hand—the hand of your true wife. Your lot is mine. You dare not refuse me when I tell you that I cannot, and will not, live without you!"

Oh, how surpassingly beautiful, how indescribably noble, she was in her enthusiasm!

"Jeanne!" her name burst like a jubilant cry from his lips, "Jeanne, my love!"

"Paul!"—and they were clasped in each other's arms. "You shall not remain longer in your hateful bondage," after a while said Jeanne, with determination in her face and tone. "Your wife will release you."

"Oh, how I long for my release, now that I know you will share my lot!" fervently responded Paul. "Every fibre of my being now yearns for freedom; but how, how shall I break my chains? How will you accomplish it, sweet love?"

"I have a plan." She looked cautiously around the

room, then, placing her lips close to his ear, she whispered in a tone that he alone could hear. While he listened, his face brightened, his eyes once more sparkled with the old fire.

A few days later, the betrothal of Herr von Gundling to the daughter of the French historian was announced at court.

There was a decided sensation. The court fool was a handsome man, whom many a coquettish young woman would gladly have won to herself from his fealty to the wine-cup. Those fair ones, however, who were less susceptible to manly beauty, marveled greatly at Mademoiselle de Larrey's choice, for it was well known that she had refused a score of distinguished suitors. It was Jeanne's wish that her engagement should be made public. She wanted all the world to know that she was the future wife of the scorned "court fool."

This was her atonement.

Many jests were made at the expense of the "fortunate clown"; and brilliant plans for the celebration of his marriage were concocted in the king's audience-hall. A fitting procession should escort the bridal pair to the altar; there should be all sorts of festivities; the courtiers would arrange a series of tableaux to represent the "Triumph of Folly," and the "Fool's Reward."

But these brilliant intentions were never carried out.

The court fool,—so it was said,—fell ill, so seriously ill, indeed, that no one was permitted to see him. His illness lasted for several weeks. The marriage festivities, and tableaux, were indefinitely postponed, because the wedding took place in the sick room, no one being present except the immediate relatives of the bride and groom.

Two days after the ceremony, the court learned with surprise that Paul Gundling, the court fool, was dead. Then the thoughtless crowd, disappointed at not being able to air their wit at a wedding ceremony, wantonly decided to make a parade of the funeral.

They repaired to the court fool's residence, and, pre-

tending that they were about to give it a stately entombment, demanded the body.

The sealed coffin was delivered to the frivolous company. It never occurred to them to open the casket for a last look at the face of their quondam companion, or to see whether they had really the court fool's body, or merely a stuffed puppet. They enclosed it in a second casket, fashioned in the semblance of a wine-cask, painted black and ornamented with a white cross.

A great crowd followed this singular coffin to the cemetery, where, the clergymen of the city having refused to officiate at the mock ceremony, one of the court lackeys, dressed in the robes of a priest, read the service for the dead! At that same hour, a close traveling-carriage rolled swiftly along the highway toward Dresden. Within the carriage sat a lovely woman, the dark-eyed Jeanne von Gundling, but no one would have recognized in the sturdy postilion on the box the former court fool.

For the last time, Paul von Gundling wore the livery of servitude. When the hour came for him to remove his coachman's coat and hat, he would be a free man.

He urged the steeds into swifter pace, that they might more quickly bear him from the scene of his disgrace and humiliation. He had no glance for the beauties of the landscape; no glance for towering mountain, and fertile plain, for forest and stream no eye for the travelers he met on the road—he was absorbed in a happy dream, in thought of the joy that would be his when he reached the distant Italian city, where the sun was warmer, and the sky more blue, than here in the cold north country.

And when, after many days, they arrived in the friendly land, where the vine grows as vigorously as the young peach tree, another postilion occupied the coachman's seat, and by the side of the lovely woman in the carriage sat her happy husband, who never wearied of whispering tender words in her ear.

Hal Reid has written for ROMANCE this affecting little sketch of humble life in the South.

ONE OF THE PRESTONS.

TEXAS.

The mid-summer day is waning. Across the broad acres of the cotton-field the blistering sun's rays are falling, like the heat from a blast-furnace.

Like a yellow ribbon through the green of the cotton-plants, winding away in the distance, is a narrow road. Far down the road, driving a mule hitched to a plow, is a negro. His face is so black that, as the perspiration courses down it, it seems almost blue. He is looking away over the mule's ears to the horizon beyond. His lips are moving, and the weird, low chant of a camp-meeting hymn sounds out upon the heated air. The last words fade away in the distance, and the plow stops with a suddenness which nearly throws him from his feet, as the handles shoot upward. He brings the switch which he carries down upon the mule's flank, and with scornful eyes set upon the lazy beast, and a more scornful tone, he gives vent to his feelings.

"Das' hit! Das' jist hit! You is de mos' on-reliablust, no 'count muel dat de Lawd ebber made. Hit's jes' lak I dun tole Mars' Tom de day he bawt yo'. I sez to 'im, 'Mars' Tom, dat heah one dem Bailey muels. He des' er same lak de Bailey niggers,—no 'count, 'en ef dat haint so, may de Lawd fergib dis nigger. Yo' bettah quit waggin' dat yeah (ear) at me, suh. I gwine to bring disser briah-patch switch down on yo' lazy back, rite smawtly, suh. You 'zerbs hit ennyway, fo not seein' dat ar rock."

He examines the plow, and making sure that no harm has been done, takes the single piece of clothes-line

which answers for reins, and drives on. It is a full quarter-of-a-mile before he speaks again. An insect has flown across his face.

"Whoa!"

The mule stops willingly, and lazily throws himself on one haunch.

"Dat ar' waz a snake-feeder," he says. "Dat's de secon' one I've seed diz day, en' dey's de debbil's own slabes. Dar's trubble a-comin."

He turns and looks anxiously away across the field to the little cabin, under a few trees, down at the end of the road. There is no sign of life there, and he pursues the weary round of his labor.

"Pree-ree! Pree-ree! Pree-ree."

The never-ceasing monotone of the field-locusts and katy-dids rings ceaselessly in his ears. The mule stops, deliberately turns his shaggy head and bites viciously at his haunches. With the natural wit of his race, the man bursts forth.

"Suttenly, suttenly, Mister Bailey muel! I'll jist set down en' wait twell yo' gits dun fixin' up you' sef. Spect's yo' mus' be goin' to a big to-do dis ebenin', dat yo' combin' yo' hair so fine. Spec's yo' don' kno' who I is. Ise one de Preston's, I is. How come hit datter way? Lak dis. My ole woman, she wuz de body-servant to ole Miss Meta Belle Preston, en' she mah (marry) me, en' dat mak' me er Preston. Now yo' specs one de Preston's gwine to wait fer a Bailey muel? No! suh!" and with all earnestness he plies his briar-switch to such an extent that the mule actually trots for a rod or more, dragging the plow after him.

"Dar, suh! I gwine to larn yo' po-white trash dat yo' kay'ent fool wid de Preston folks, case we es sho' nuf' people."

"Waunk-ee! Waunk-ee! Waunk-ee!" the mule brays loudly, as mules are wont to do; but it is taken as a deadly personality by the negro.

"Who yo' laffin' at, you po-white debbil? 'f I's yo', I'd go en' hide en' de briah-patch, stid o' letten folks heah me holler lak' dat. Yo' laffin' at er Preston!—

Bud Bailey disser heah bressed minnit locked up fo' fiten a dool! G' won dar! Lak dat I haint gotter nuf' trubble, wid dat lil' boy down dar en' de cabin' layin' wid he eyes shinin' lak' de mawnin' stah en' he lil' face hotter en' dis san' is dis minnit. He gotter brek-bone feber en' he pow'ful sick, so jes yo' go long en' putty soon we be on de fibe-acres das mine, fo' wukkin dese heah six hunned en' ovah, fo' Mars' Tom."

Lazily they move along, man and mule vying one with the other in slowness. Suddenly all is changed, for, glancing cabinward, he sees his wife in the low doorway, waving something white. That was the signal that their child was worse, and with lightning-like movements he unhitches the mule and mounts him, plying the switch cruelly. They are off down the narrow road amid a cloud of yellow dust. They reach the cabin, and as he jumps from the mule, the first words that greet him are:

"De bride-groom's a-comin', Mose. De baby's gwine away."

"No, Lawd, no! Not dat, Dilsey."

"Yes, Mose. He's dyin'. I know hit, fo' a bird flewed in de winder dis' mawnin."

They enter the low door, and cross the humble room to where in the corner lies the dying child. The poor father kneels at the low bedside, and his broad black breast heaves in agony.

"Spah us, Lawd a'-mighty! Doan took our lil' boy!" he prays. "Spah disser lil' brack boy! He haint no use up dar wid de bright en' shinin' white folks!"

"Dey's all alike dar, Mose, dey's all alike!" moans the mother.

"Den how we gwine to know 'im, 'Lawd? Doan tek 'im away! Doan tek 'im away!—fo' what dis poah nigger gwine to do in de mawnins wid-out dem lil' bright eyes to luk at, wid-out dem lil' han's to pull 'is har! Oh, Lawd, Dilsey's one o' de Prestons, oh, Lawd! Cahn't ye spah him, Lawd?"

There was a convulsive movement, and the child had

passed beyond. The prayer had been of no avail. The break-bone fever had done its work.

"Oh, King! He's gone! He's gone! He's gone!" wailed the agonized woman. The day grew into dusk, and dusk into night. Out in the darkness somewhere a screech-owl wailed to its mate, and the hungry mule whinnied. Within the cabin the stricken couple, with bodies rocking to and fro, sang this sad refrain:

"Screw down the coffin-lid,
Screw down the coffin-lid;
Screw down the coffin-lid,
Our lil' boy is dead."

Hour after hour this sad chant was repeated, nor ceased until the morning sun shone across the cotton-blooms, for, as "'way down-south niggers" do, they were waking their dead.

In this story is illustrated the common fact that a man who lacks courage in a small matter, is often able to face triumphantly a far more difficult undertaking. It is by Paul Heyse, and is translated for ROMANCE by Flora E. Pettibone.

THE BEGINNING AND THE END.

In the deep window-niche of the brilliantly lighted *salon*, a single candle was burning in a silver candlestick that a winged figure upheld with both arms. The modest light was still further softened by shady plants with broad leaves and the last blossoms of the year, and a slim palm-tree delicately overarched with its light branches the entrance to the twilight arbor. Two chairs stood in it, cosily opposite each other. One was empty. In the other a woman's slender form was resting. Her head was leaning on her hand; her eyes were closed.

At the other end of the *salon* a sweet, girlish voice was singing. This music, to which at first the fair woman under the palm-tree had scarcely listened, had at last lulled her, like a tired child, to sleep.

She did not awaken, either, when the song was at an end, and the old gentlemen cried out their encouraging bravoes; when the stool was pushed back from the piano, and the interrupted conversation buzzed with fresh vivacity through the *salon*. No one came to disturb her. For she was a stranger in that circle, and, besides, there was an expression of seriousness on her face not wholly attractive to new acquaintances. It was her fate to be thought proud, and she knew it. That she did nothing to disturb this erroneous belief was more the result of the comfort it brought her than of any feeling of hauteur.

A familiar voice calling her name penetrated her sleep. When she, bewildered, opened her eyes, the master of the house was standing before her, holding

a tall stranger by the hand, whose lofty forehead touched the palm-branches.

"Will you allow me to disturb your meditation, Frau Eugenie?" said her host, smiling. "I bring you my friend and cousin, Valentine Storm, who has been our guest but a few hours and who only a few weeks ago returned to his native land. But now, I think, we shall hold him fast, and who could assist us more in promoting this object than the German ladies?"

He had long since turned his back, but the two still remained opposite each other without a word of greeting. The man's eyes were resting on the red rose in the beautiful woman's hair, and only the waving of the palm-branch at his head betrayed that blood flowed in his veins. Eugenie's face looked earnestly up at him as if pondering on some riddle. Or had sleep not yet withdrawn its veil entirely from her eyes? If this meeting was but a dream, she did not indeed dream it for the first time. But have dreams the power to change familiar features as years do, to whiten locks and grave such furrows as, at the first glance, she had seen above this man's heavy brows?

The longer he made her wait for him to address her, the redder glowed her cheeks. Once or twice she opened her lips, but, after all, remained silent and dropped her eyes.

"Frau Eugenie," said he at last, "permit me, like my cousin, to call you so—I have but just arrived and to tell the truth, have neglected to ask my host your husband's name. How strangely people meet again in life! I am astounded at my utter lack of presentiment, that no heavenly or earthly sign foretold this meeting to me."

"A special reason brought me here," she answered hurriedly. "I wished to put my son at some good school, and was told I could find no better one for him than there is in this city. I passed last night in the diligence, entirely without sleep, and I may as well confess to you that, just as you came, tired Nature was making up for her loss, regardless of propriety. I tell you this

because it must seem strange to an old friend to have been greeted in such an absent way and with so little warmth."

She now gave him her hand.

"I thank you," replied he, and his face brightened. "I thank you for having preserved my slight claim to your friendship. Continue to treat me now in the old familiar way, and enjoy once more the rest I unfortunately disturbed. I'll take care that no one makes his way into this arbor again, and if you wish it, will stand guard myself by the palm-tree at the entrance."

She laughed.

"No," said she, "that isn't what I meant. I am only too tired to converse with perfect strangers. If you will put up with my good intentions, sit down by me and tell me how it has fared with you."

"You will yourself be best able to judge how it must have fared with me, when I confide to you, in the deepest secrecy, how it fares with me at the present moment. My friend has invited me here to his house, in order to marry me off—in some way or other. What do you say to that? He considers it his duty. To what a pass it must have come with a man whose friends consider it their duty to render him harmless in such a way!"

"You frighten me," answered she, smiling. "When I knew you, you were, even if—well, a trifle dangerous, still, far from doing so much mischief that it would have been deemed necessary for public safety to put you in chains."

"You are mocking, Frau Eugenie. Oh, that trick of yours—how well I remember it! But this time your arrows don't strike me. My good cousin fears mischief from me for no one but myself. He is of the opinion that, if I continue to live alone in that old robber-castle I have purchased, pursuing crotchets and hares, and doctoring my peasants' husbandry with wonderful prescriptions which I myself know nothing about, the small remnant of common sense he is so kind as to still give me credit for, will some fine day com-

pletely vanish. You see, he intends to treat me homœopathically, to cure one folly with another. Sometimes I think it may be too late."

"Too late? I can reckon up. It is fourteen years since we have met. If you didn't make yourself out younger then than you were, you have hardly yet reached the years we call the best."

"Make myself out younger? Good heavens! the contrary, rather, would have been for my interest. Ah, what you remind me of, Eugenie!"

"And is she lovely, young, and charming, your fiancée?" she quickly resumed again. "There would be no need of my asking this question, which, you see, implies a doubt, if you had not given a friend full power to dispose of your heart. And in such things friends are not always to be trusted."

"You do our excellent host great wrong," he replied, laughing. "Not one of those three cardinal virtues is lacking. And not only that—every one of them, even, exists three times."

"Three times?"

"I mean in three different exemplars. Just think how difficult must be a choice between them!"

"And all three are desperately in love with you?"

"Don't worry. Up to the present moment not one of my brides-elect knows that I am in existence."

"Their father——"

"Three sisters therefore?"

"Yes, a blond-haired, a brown-haired, and a black-haired one. Early to-morrow morning my merciless kidnapper puts me into his carriage, and delivers me over to my fate. They live in L——, four short leagues from here, and the purchase of a horse is to form the pretext for our visit. Their father (a physician in this little place) has a magnificent gray in his stable, of pure Arabian blood."

"You go forth as Saul, the son of Kish, once did. May you, like him, return home with a kingdom!"

"If you knew," he said, thoughtfully, "how little I long for sovereignty! For is there a greater slave to

his duties than a king? To-day I am still free, and take the liberty, therefore, of sitting down by you and thinking of by-gone lovely days, when, it is indeed true, I lay in fetters, but they were magic ones."

She was silent, while he threw himself into the other chair and pushed it toward the *salon* in such a way that he saw nothing at all of the company, but could only regard the plants at the window, and the candle, and the woman's beautiful face. In the meantime, the hostess had seated herself at the piano to play a dance, and soon the slender top of the palm was trembling in the whirlwind of the couples flying past. Eugenie looked quietly on at the lively scene, her left hand toying with her gold chain, her right holding her lovely bouquet negligently on her lap. Valentine watched her. When she noticed this, she raised the flowers and half-buried her face in them.

"You think it rude in me," observed he, "to sit down thus in front of you, as I would before a picture. But can it help surprising me that all the colors still shine just as fresh upon you as they did so many years ago? If I divest myself for a moment of the thought that I have grown fourteen years older and am to be married to-morrow, I can delude myself completely into believing I am sitting again, as so often, in the green-house at your mother's, and have just laid aside the book from which I have been reading aloud to you, and you are now gazing out through the panes at the play of the flies above the pond, or the falling of the leaves. And Frederick is there and Cora—what has become of Cora?"

"Cora sleeps the long sleep," she answered, "not far from the little pond, at the spot where the bench stood under the elm, if you remember."

"Oh, it all seems as if it were but yesterday!" he exclaimed. "I imagine I glow again with the fire that, in the midst of the sharp December wind, coursed through all my veins. I can still feel the pressure of your hand, just as I felt it then and for long weeks afterwards."

"You musn't get angry," continued he, "at my divulging all this so frankly to you now. We are no longer the same, and can talk about it as though we were telling something about strangers. It is a very harmless pleasure, my being allowed to say to you to-day what trembled on my lips a hundred times so long ago, ever to be driven back by my unhappy shyness. But now here we sit opposite each other, like two good comrades who have an old debt still to settle between them."

"Who is the creditor?" she asked, earnestly.

"Both of us. Or else, won't you consider me so just a little? If you knew the trouble you have given me,—for how many years your image stood between me and every full enjoyment of life! But you haven't told me a word yet about yourself, and I never had the courage to find out anything through others. Since I learned you were married, I have avoided every place where I could hear about you—nay, I do not even know your husband's name. The best thing will be to introduce me to him at once. Of course, he's here this evening also?"

"I have lost him. It is seven years since he died."

He started. "I have only the boy," she continued, "and now I must be separated from him, too, for he must go away to school."

"I must see him," said he, quickly, and stared fixedly at the bouquet in her right hand. "He has lost his father, poor child! When he grows up, Frau Eugenie, just send him to me. He shall go hunting with me and ride my horses, and if he falls in love with my eldest daughter, then the beginning and the end would indeed converge again, only in a different way from what I, foolish man, used to dream. Will you give your consent, Eugenie?"

He held out his hand to her.

"With all due respect for my son's future father-in-law," she replied, brightly, "I must make the stipulation, nevertheless, to see the maid first, since you can't answer yet for even the mother."

"That the mother must meet with your approval is a matter of course. I won't have her at all if she is so

unfortunate as not to please you. Perhaps we had better——"

A young man, approaching the window-niche in a hesitating way to invite the stranger to dance, interrupted the conversation, and she stepped out of the arbor with him. Valentine, who remained behind by the palm, saw her standing for a while longer among the others, and thought he could distinguish her voice now and then. It seemed to him as if he had forgotten something of importance that he wished to say to her, and he tried to remember what it could possibly be. At last it occurred to him that, for the sake of politeness, he must inquire after her mother. But when he searched through the *salon* and the adjoining rooms for her, she had disappeared.

It was the second morning after that evening. The dense matin mist still hung in the streets of the city, but the upper air was growing red, and promised a sunny day.

In one of the rooms of the hotel Frau Eugenie was seated at a writing-desk, with a letter partly written before her. She had laid her clasped hands on the page, and her thoughts were straying far away from the contents of those lines. Footsteps sounded outside. She started up and listened. They passed by her door, and she remained alone.

Why did all her musings return, again and again, to one evening on that garden path in the olden days where the sunflowers stood among the asters, and the little fruit-trees cast long shadows across the vegetable beds? To-morrow she was to see the day decline far from that quiet spot, and when she returned, snow would be lying on the beds, and the trees would have had to yield up both foliage and fruit. And the student walking beside her, punching deep holes in the ground with her parasol, knew this. He had seen the travelling-carriage standing packed in the court, and Frederick, her cousin, his rival, whom he hated, strapping his valise firmly to the box. When we set out on a journey,

who can answer for our return, or, at least, that we shall return as we went? Therefore, how expedient it is for us to make a mutual disclosure of our last wills and testaments beforehand, especially when we are intending to bequeath ourselves to each other, soul and body! And if he had known what a great concession it was on her part to turn her steps to this more remote portion of the garden! She was angry with herself on the way for having gone even that far to meet him. But now not one hair's-breadth farther! Now *he* should and must do the rest, or she could never forgive herself for what she had already done to loosen his tongue for him.

But he was perfectly silent, and she became silent too. What a struggle she had to keep back the tears!—tears of excitement, of anger, of both love and shame. And still he would not speak! Then suddenly she turned round, her cheeks all aglow, and said: "Let us go back. Give me the parasol, you'll break it, and it is to go on my journey with me. Let us walk faster. I have ever so much packing to do still. Do you know, it just horrifies me to think how much I shall forget during my absence. The English kings that you've impressed on my mind in such a nice way from Shakespeare, will hardly stay in my head. It's a perfect shame, but what can I do? My cousins aren't as good pedagogues as you are. When I come back—but who knows whether my aunt will not insist upon keeping me with her all winter. Well, perhaps then it may be a year and a day before you can hear me repeat them again, and if I don't stand the test very well, the long time will have to excuse me."

It was a longer time than a year and a day. The next morning, when the travelling-carriage was standing in front of the house, and they had already seated themselves in it, he came once more to the carriage-door. He handed in a bouquet of flowers—the mother took them and thanked him kindly. Eugenie gave him a merry nod, and held out her gloved hand. He did not see, behind her veil, the pallor of her face and

her swollen eyelids. Then he closed the door and took off his hat. Frederick, from his place on the box, turned round again for a parting look as the carriage was rolling away, and in his honest face there shone someting like the pity of a favored man for a slighted rival.

That was in the fall. When they returned in the dead of winter, he had been obliged to leave town in the meantime to work at some little court in the province. Not before summer was he able to pull the well-known bell at the garden-gate. He was told there was company at the house—some cousins and other guests. He left word that he would come again. But the mother's cold greeting, when she met him on the street the next day, showed him plainly that he would not find things as he wished, and he did not go again.

Was he missed, after all? Who could decipher the writing on Eugenie's pale brow when three years later she gave her hand to the man her mother had chosen for her! Yet now, as she gazed away into the past across the lines of the letter, the words of a thoughtful little song rang in her ears:

> "Happier I might have been,
> And happier have made!"

Just then the quick beat of hoofs came up from the street below, and she flew to the window. A rider on a beautiful Arabian-gray dashed at full speed through the mist, which closed again behind him, and the smoke steamed in clouds from the horse's wide nostrils. Her eyes followed with restless fire the proud figure of the man whose hand controlled the spirited animal without trouble. What a contrast between that knightly intrepidity and the gentle, dreamy appearance of the youth of fourteen years ago!

Presently she heard him coming up the stairs, the door opened, and Valentine walked in.

She came to meet him with a friendly air, and shook hands with him. "Good-morning," said she. "How good of you to keep your word! The triumphant tread

of your horse has already betrayed to me that you return a victor."

"Eugenie!" replied he, "you must really give me a long credit-mark for showing my face before you at all, certain as I am of being received by you with the finest of mockery. The entire winnings of my trip yesterday are the horse down there, which I paid for in cash, and this apple, which I stole."

He laid a beautiful pale-yellow apple on the table, and threw himself without further ceremony into a chair.

Eugenie stood smiling before him.

"I don't think these trophies of your campaign so despicable," she returned. "To be sure, I'm not a judge of horses, but seeing that you have, without doubt, pilfered this beautiful apple from your intended——"

"If I had only got as far as that," he impatiently interrupted her, "I shouldn't fear for the rest. But you are entirely mistaken if you're accusing me in your thoughts of want of courage again. On the contrary, the difficulty this time was that I had altogether too much. Upon my word, it wouldn't have cost me the slightest effort to have proposed to all three, one after the other."

"Just think of the trouble you might have made then!"

"I expected that you would have nothing more than an ironical sympathy for me. And yet—you see how serious the dilemma is that I am in. I come to you for advice and help, and you must give them to me."

"You ask more of me than I, with the best will in the world, shall be able to perform."

"You are able, Eugenie, if you will only hear what it is. I was out there, you know, with our friend, all day long, in their company all the time."

"That's very little and a great deal, just as you have a mind to take it."

"You're right. It's enough to lose one's heart to all three of the sisters in turn, and much too short a time to give the preference to any one of them. One would just have to take possession of the whole nest at once."

"Are all three then so perfectly irresistible?"

"Perfectly irresistible, all three, and each one in such a way of her own that you think you can't possibly be satisfied with one alone when you see another beside her."

"You are altogether too indefinite and extravagant in your account. I want to be informed of everything minutely and in its proper order. Therefore first the blonde, then the brown-haired one, then the brunette. Or how do they follow each other in age?"

"I don't know. Let me tell you how it is. You see I had made the stipulation with my cousin beforehand that he was not to give the slightest hint of all this to either the old gentleman or his daughters. And so the doctor happened to be out. My three Fates, though, were all at home, in the neatest of dresses, fresh and charming, like three moss-roses on one stem. Nay, positively, Frau Eugenie, perfectly exquisite Graces, and not a bit countrified, either. I couldn't look at them enough."

"The beginning is promising."

"All three of them let their household affairs go, came running to meet my cousin, and the sweetest trio of gay girlish voices all chirped away together. I, naturally, as far as looks and words are concerned, came in at first for a very small share of attention, and was perfectly satisfied with it, as I was thus able to watch them undisturbed. In the afternoon we took a walk through the town and out to the old castle, where the former king used to give his fêtes.

"We took our way through the orchard, the sisters in their light little hats ahead, all dressed alike. And as I looked at them, it came into my mind how similar my position was to that of the prince who was tending his father's flocks and was suddenly called upon to bestow the prize of beauty among three goddesses."

"And you appropriated this apple in order that it might help you as it did them out of the difficulty?"

"That's it exactly. I slipped it unobserved into my pocket. And when we had strayed deeper into the old

park, and, in the narrower paths, now one and now another of the sisters walked alone by my side, every once in a while I secretly felt for my apple, just whenever I imagined myself convinced that that one, and that one only, was the right one. Then one of the others but needed to turn round, or a word, a laugh, to strike my ear, and the apple remained in its hiding-place. And the consequence is that I've brought it carefully away from there without getting rid of it. Isn't it enough to drive one to despair, Eugenie? When I was in love I had no courage, and now that I have courage there is no love."

"You must not lose heart at once, my poor friend," said she, naïvely. "You have done splendidly for the beginning, and as little as Rome was built in a day, just so little can you expect to found a home of your own in so short a time. But what about the names? Haven't you any preference there either? I set a great value upon names, and perfectly understand that dauphin who would have 'no Urraca' for a wife."

"No help there either," replied he, with a troubled air. "Anna, Clara, Maria—any one of the three would suit me. No, my friend, I depend now upon you alone."

"Upon me? I haven't the remotest idea of what possible use I can be to you in such an intricate case."

"It is a great favor, I know, that I want you to do," he said, with some hesitation. He had risen and taken the apple in his hand. He threw it up two or three times, caught it again, and then put it back on the table.

"See," continued he, "as I mounted my horse this morning, after passing a very restless night—my cousin had already driven back in the evening—and was riding along through the mist and morning rime, I fell to thinking about how strangely all this had happened. Right on the very eve of the most important decision of my life, I am fated to meet you again, the only one who really knows me, and to whom I could confess with all my heart whatever, perchance, might still be

lacking for a perfect acquaintance. I thought of your goodness and of all the harm, too, you had done me, and that you are really in my debt still, and can not refuse to make me some reparation for all I have suffered and been deprived of. What else besides I may have thought, Eugenie—I will not tell you now. And so there ripened in me a very wise plan, which you must not spoil for me."

"Let me hear what it is," said she, absently.

"What do you say to your getting into a carriage with me at once and driving straightway to L——? I'll take you to the doctor's, and you can see all three side by side. The one to whom you then give the apple, that one it shall be, and I here promise you solemnly not to make the slightest objection."

"Such power is too great to be given and accepted."

"Why? If I can prevail on the friend of my youth to give me her advice, in the firm persuasion that such girlish creatures as these are more transparent to a sagacious woman than to a man like me—where then could any danger lie?"

"And if I should make up my mind to comply with your quixotic wish, under what pretext do you intend to introduce me into that strange household?"

"Oh, I've arranged that too," replied he, perfectly at his ease, and tapping the bright-hued carpet lightly with his riding-whip. "I'll present you to the little folk as my fiancée. In that way, you see, we shall be the most certain of gaining our end. For a girl—no matter how innocent and undesigning—before an unmarried or unengaged man is always sure to turn the best side out. Daughters of Eve, every one of them! Whereas, if I return to them with 'my market made,' I shall readily discern which of the sisters the day before was playing more or less of a part, perhaps even, whether one of them has already secretly taken possession of me. Surprise causes one's true nature to come to light."

He looked at Eugenie, who was standing before him with an air of quiet reflection. She had suffered him to finish speaking, but now shook her head.

"Think of something else, Herr Storm, I can't agree to this proposal."

"It's so harmless!"

"Perhaps. But I feel neither disposed nor able to sustain such a rôle successfully to the end, and if I dropped the mask before the proper time, your embarrassment would not be less than mine."

"Consent to be called my sister then."

She deliberated.

"If I do," said she, at last, "it is only to prove to you that I can't help you in the least. What an old woman sees in a girl to admire or criticise, is something quite different from what men care about. Besides, I confess to feeling just a little curiosity, not to mention my fear of your cousin, who would never forgive me if he found out that I hadn't furthered his philanthropic plan with you in every possible manner."

"Thank you," he cried, joyfully, and, taking her hand, kissed it. "Now I'm free from all care. Oh, it is indeed Heaven's choicest gift to find true friendship! Just let me go down to the landlord and order the carriage at once," and in a few moments they were on their way.

"I have been thinking, Frau Eugenie," he began suddenly, after they had ridden for some time in silence, "why must it be in L——, I should like to know, that I try my fate? Why, indeed, with one of those three sisters? I might, after all, find what I seek nearer."

"You ought to be ashamed of your wavering," answered she, with droll solemnity. "Is this the courage you've been boasting of? Be a man. Here is your pilfered apple. Put it back into your pocket again. The sin of having stolen it can only be atoned for by the greater robbery of the heart of one of the sisters."

She turned aside and looked out of the carriage window. The country was contracting to a narrow valley, and on both sides rose the vineyards. The mist was now completely dissipated, and the bright sun flashed on the moist vines and leaves; while the river rustled

along amid willows and alders, and little boats went gliding down the stream.

There is nothing more refreshing and exhilarating than a pleasure-drive under a clear autumn sky. Even Valentine felt it, and took up once more the broken thread of conversation. He inquired first of all after her mother. Thereupon Eugenie began herself to talk of her husband.

"You would have been his friend, Herr Storm," said she, earnestly. "He was an excellent man, a brave officer, and inspired with a feeling for everything beautiful and good in life. Strangers called him cold; but he bore within him a fund of noble warmth which was of service to his fellow-men, his family and friends. My mother mourns for him to this day, almost as for my father himself. I hope Fred may grow up his counterpart."

Valentine relapsed into a long silence. At last he asked, without looking at her: "And since you have been a widow you have turned a willing ear to no new suitor, who, doubtless, has not been wanting?"

"No, my friend," she replied, calmly. "Love set me free, and a marriage in which there is esteem alone —it is always a piece of extraordinary good fortune if one does not have to regret it."

At this moment they drove round a bend in the valley, and a sudden transformation in the landscape interrupted their conversation.

"That is C——" said the driver, pointing in the direction of the town with his whip and stopping his horses for a moment.

"Just drive across the bridge, my good man," Valentine called to him. "We'll not go by without first taking a closer look at the beautiful cathedral yonder."

Eugenie gave him a quick glance of inquiry.

"Let me manage it," Valentine continued. "We shall still reach our doctor's in plenty of time. I should think we might rest here for a while, ascend the tower and dine afterward in this little town, so as not to surprise my future father-in-law just at dinner-time again.

It will be moonlight, and the homeward drive, even if a bit belated, will be none the less pleasant on that account."

"So be it then!" said she. "Yet only on condition that my brave knight holds firmly to our first agreement and doesn't try to find some pretext for keeping the apple in his pocket again to-day."

He laughingly promised it upon his honor as a knight.

They alighted at the cathedral and had the ancient portal opened for them. The door-keeper, a gray-haired old woman, led them slowly around in the lofty nave, coughing and panting.

"The church air is bad for one of your years," said Valentine. "Have you no grandchild who could show visitors about? You ought to be sitting outside in the sun; I dare say we can find our way alone."

"Oh, down here in the church it don't matter so much," the old woman answered. "But, to be sure, I never drag myself up all those steps in the tower. If you want to go up, you can't go astray—flight after flight clear up to the highest gallery, where one's head begins to whirl."

Valentine looked at Eugenie.

"Of course we're going up?"

She nodded. Through a little door which two dragons guarded, carved in the stone on either side, they passed into the tower and left their guide behind them. Here they were completely shut off from all the splendor and the mild warmth of the autumn sun, and the cool twilight surrounding them made them silent. As they mounted the winding stairs, she somewhat in advance of him, involuntarily he sighed. She paused on one of the landings and looked merrily round at him.

"You are losing your breath, my friend," said she.

"It seems to me, on the contrary, as if I had too much," he answered.

"Be saving of it; I fancy we shall have need of a good deal yet. Only see how high we stand above the world already, and the belt of the naves is still above our heads."

"I seriously believe, Eugenie, that you're leading me right into Heaven."

"Don't be too sure," she jested, "you must deserve it first."

"And what if I should make up my mind to take it by storm?"

"Let us wait and see whether your head is steady enough for such a Titan undertaking. But you take the lead now; the stairs are getting narrower, and I shall lose courage unless I see some one in front of me."

Obediently he did as she wished, and went on up the stairs, plunged in deep thought. He did not have the heart to look back at her, flitting so softly along behind him. Only the rustle of her gown against the wall told him that she was following him.

They leaned at last side by side against the stone parapet at the top, and he saw her face in its pure profile exposed to the sun, from which she did not try to shade it. The fresh breeze ruffled her luxuriant hair, loosened a light strand and whipped Valentine's cheek with it. She did not notice it; with parted lips she stood drinking in the invigorating air, her delicate nostrils quivering as she breathed, and the blood coursing more swiftly through her veins.

"Are we not rewarded for our pains?" asked she. "It is glorious here. And how dear the world and people become to us, the farther we are separated from them! I can imagine how a true misanthrope, who, out of hatred and detestation of life, ascends a tower in order to cast himself down from the height, all at once becomes completely changed and feels his heart melt with love at the sight of the hundreds of humble roofs standing so close together in the narrow space far below him, under which thousands endure existence in toil and care, and find it, too, endurable if only now and then they can look up at the sky, and the sun, and the golden cross on the tower."

"There is a purifying power in the air of a height," he answered softly. "The daily considerations and habits no longer restrain and oppress us, we fancy

ourselves brought nearer our creator, nay, called upon to govern life itself, as with one glance we measure all that lies unfolded at our feet. Even the faintest heart takes courage here, and that which down in the pitiableness and tumult of the everyday world one never dared to dream of, here comes of itself from the heart to the lips."

The music of horns and flutes suddenly floated up from the town, and a band of musicians, followed by a crowd at a slow and dignified pace, could be seen issuing from one of the streets and marching across the square. The sun flashed on the yellow metal, and the people wore nosegays on their hats.

"A wedding," said Valentine.

"Where is the bride?" Eugenie objected. "I think it is one of those gatherings that at this time of the year go marching daily to the vineyards to celebrate the vintage. But you remind me of weddings most opportunely. Let us go down again and remember the great object of the day."

He did not seem to hear her.

"Eugenie," said he, "if fourteen years ago I had stood here by your side, it might have been different!"

"Would it have been better, I wonder? I now am of the opinion that everything that comes is well and for our good."

He had taken out the apple, and was holding it in his hand on the cornice of the stone gallery. "Do you really believe that, Eugenie?"

"Really."

"And if I had said to you then what, Heaven knows how, escaped my lips two nights ago, what would have been your answer, Eugenie?"

"That is a question of conscience, my friend," she replied lightly, "such as must not come upon one so unawares even at this great distance above the world. To give a correct and truthful answer, I should be obliged to read again some chapters in my book of memory, leaves of which I have not turned these many years."

"Of course, I cannot expect you to take that trouble," he answered quickly, his voice sharp with pain. "Moreover, it would be in vain, for the writing, doubtless, is effaced. I forgot that you have had a continuation, where with me there is nothing but blank leaves."

At these words he stood erect against the parapet, and the apple, which he had been holding in his hand, seemingly through carelessness rolled over the cornice. It struck hard on the angular point of one of the many indented pinnacles rising on the tower, and the pieces into which it flew shot down in a high arch to the street below.

"Why, Herr Storm!" cried Eugenie. "What have you done? Now where are we going to steal another apple again so soon? But come down so much the quicker; the fruit that might be gathered here is of stone."

"You are right, it is all of stone; I was not prepared for that," he replied, listlessly, and went in silence down the stairs.

They reached the hotel at last, much too late for table d'hôte, and sat down in solitude in the large dining-room to a slight repast, at which the best kind of native wine was not wanting. But she insisted upon trying some of the new vintage, whose perfume, she said, had been wafted to her long enough from afar. She praised the sweet, turbid drink.

"It is exactly like a first love," said Valentine. "You must be on your guard, though, Eugenie, that it doesn't go to your head a little."

"At my age there is no danger," answered she with a smile. "But we are delaying too long. Let us set out again."

Rapidly as they now pushed on, it was growing dusk when they finally reached the goal of their journey. The carriage rattled slowly over the poorly-paved road up the gentle slope on which it lay, and the fog enveloped town and environs in its veil. Valentine helped Eugenie out of the carriage, which had halted in front of the inn, and walked along beside her the few

blocks to the doctor's without speaking. She saw that he was very much excited, and almost pitied him. But they were already going up the stone steps of the neat little house; they pulled the bell, and a short, thickset man, with a pair of large gold spectacles on, opened the door without delay.

"The deuce!" cried the vivacious little gentleman, pushing up his glasses. "My dear sir, what in the world gives me the unexpected pleasure of seeing you again so soon? I hope the horse—but you've not come alone, as I only this moment observe, and here I am so rude as not to urge you first of all to come in! You really must excuse me, fair lady. We are only half-civilized in this out-of-the-way little nest of ours. I beg you most humbly to do my poor home the honor of entering it! But seriously, my good friend, there's nothing the matter with Almansor, I hope? And to think, now, madam, that you should happen to find no one at home but myself! My daughters will never cease to regret—but I'll send for them, immediately—why, bless me, I have sent already, and they ought to be back any moment. Here, to the left, if you please; the hall is a little dark; have the goodness to step right in here, my honored guests."

They followed the lively man to the room that he opened for them, and walked in. There stood a table with four covers, some cold dishes, and a bottle of new wine, and the last of the fading daylight was looking in at the windows.

"Just see, my friends, that's what you get from your children. Off they run and make their poor father wait for his supper. Now we'll play them a trick, and let them find empty dishes when they come home. But I forget, wretched man, that there's nothing here fit to offer such company. And the servant, too, has gone after the children, and I haven't a soul—but at least sit down and make yourselves as comfortable as you can—heartily welcome to L——! And now, my dear sir, out with it! There's surely nothing the matter with——"

"You can set your heart completely at rest, doctor, in regard to Almansor," Valentine interrupted him. "His glorious qualities shine forth in all the greater splendor ever since he has found favor in the eyes of my dear fiancée, whom I now have the pleasure of presenting to you."

Eugenie bowed to the petrified little master of the house. She had a word for Valentine on the tip of her tongue, but it remained unsaid, and only a swift, reproachful look punished him for his arbitrary breach of contract. Had the doctor had a suspicion, after all, that the visit of the preceding day had meant far more than the sale of a horse? With many low bows he stammered out his congratulations and his thanks to Valentine for the great honor vouchsafed him. However, he soon regained his jovial equilibrium, and began to give vent to his indignation: "Well, that's what I call a malicious trick, and false friendship into the bargain, you bad man, you! Who was it, pray tell me, that only yesterday and on this self-same spot went on in such a perfect stream of abuse against matrimony as to make an old widower himself quake in his boots even yet? And the very next day he comes and introduces his fiancée, and such a fiancée, too—of course, it has been done for the conversion of a heathen —with your permission, madam."

Valentine laughed. "No, doctor," answered he, "on nobody else but yourself will the blame have to rest if I do carry my point, after all, in my heresy yesterday."

"On me? You're joking."

"In all seriousness, doctor, you yourself are the very one who gained me my betrothed, or at any rate, your Almansor did. The moment I made my appearance on that noble animal in front of my dear Eugenie's window this morning, her heart melted, and she declared herself conquered. But scarcely had I come to my senses a little from the unlooked-for joy of my victory, when I at once insisted that the first person to whom we made known our engagement should be and

must be you. So we got right into the carriage, drove straight out, and here we are; and now, my dear friend, accept the heartfelt thanks of the happiest and most grateful man in the world.'

The doctor fairly beamed with delight.

"Just hear that once!" he cried. "Why now, I never could tell you the amount of vexation my passion for horses has brought me during my life, but this master-stroke of my brave Almansor's much more than makes up for it all. I'm sure, charming fraulein, you needn't take it ill of your intended, that he has let out your secret. I only esteem you so much the more highly for your appreciation of the fact that not until he is on horseback is a man wholly a man. But where under the sun can they be," he exclaimed, "those confounded young hussies? Just when there's the finest prospect of celebrating your betrothal by the pleasantest kind of a time!"

"Are your daughters visiting somewhere in town?" asked Eugenie.

"Why, yes, madam! They have been invited to one of the autumn merry-makings, a grape-gathering at an old friend's. But they should be at home before dark."

"Ho, Henry!" he called to his coachman, whom he had seen through the window, "I want you to run down to Kilzinger's garden right away, and tell Margaret to bring my daughters home. There, you see," turning again to the couple, who were sitting side by side without looking at each other, "that is the amount of respect a father has to enjoy. See that you bring up your children better. Ah well, when my wife was alive!"

Eugenie colored and kept silence, but Valentine cried: "No, no, doctor! You must not disturb your girls in their pleasure on our account. We will drive over another day."

"But, Herr Storm," began Eugenie.

"Listen to that, will you, doctor! Didn't you give me your word, Eugenie, that you would call me Valen-

tine (just as you should, of course), even if we have not drunk 'fraternity' yet in all due form?"

"Oh, that can be done at once," exclaimed their host. "On the table, to be sure, there is nothing but new wine, but in the cellar——"

"Don't trouble yourself, old friend. Isn't this new wine as sweet, and untransparent, and intoxicating as a youthful love? And that woman, as she sits there before you, has verily been my idol since my college days, and if life has parted us in the mean time, old love does not rust, say the people, and the voice of the people is the voice of God. And the promise, therefore, shall be sealed in no other drink but this. Pour it out, doctor!"

He had sprung to his feet, and now stepped up in front of Eugenie again with two glasses full of the wine. She sat on the sofa, covered with blushes and with downcast eyes. She tried to speak, but could not utter a word. Mechanically she took the glass he offered her. He knelt down before her, wound his arm through hers in true student-fashion, and drained the other. She, also, sipped at her glass. Then, throwing his away, he kissed her, while she did not venture to look at him.

"There, that settles it," said the doctor, "and there's no need of your blushing, lovely fiancée, because an old boy like me has been witness to this solemn act. And I expect, moreover, for my good services, to be invited to the wedding.'

Valentine nodded quietly, and stood in silence for a while in front of Eugenie, his gaze riveted on her face.

"My dear doctor," he said then, "you must make some allowance for us foolish people. It is no small matter to be engaged so short a time as we two have been. See that dear love of mine there, how terribly she has tormented me with her tricks and wicked words, so that I grew dumb and awkward like a perfect boy. At this moment, though, she is quite changed, and, to look at her, you'd never dream of the art and woman's roguery lurking behind those quiet eyelids."

"You slander me, Valentine," replied she, lifting up her beautiful moist eyes. "It is natural, I think, that I shouldn't feel quite as much at home yet in this house as you do."

"And who else is to blame but myself," cried the doctor, "or, rather, those wicked girls who leave me here to keep house alone. If they only dreamed now what they've made themselves lose by their disobedience!"

When the clock struck eight, Eugenie rose. "We can hardly wait any longer for your daughters, I fear," said she. "It is too bad, but we will drive over another day."

"I won't attempt to detain you," the doctor replied; "for it seems to me as if they had no intention of coming at all till I go and get them myself."

They now set out, and the doctor insisted upon accompanying his guests as far as the inn.

"Let us start at once on our return," said she. When they were fairly on their way, "My friend!" she cried, "why were you not as shy in those old years as you are now! Ah, what have you not made me suffer! And now it comes too late!"

"Too late! No, Eugenie, where are the years between then and to-day! A shy boy as then, I stand here, begging in the dark for a ray from your dear eyes. Tell me that everything is forgiven!"

He caught her to his breast; she smoothed his brow and said: "Here are furrows; but—as you say, my friend, it may not be too late—our hearts are young and furrowless, and to-morrow we will begin again where years ago we were interrupted."

They kissed passionately, and remained for many moments locked in a close embrace. The moon vanquished the mist which surrounded them, and a light autumn wind rose and drove the perfume of new wine into the carriage. It was the presage to them of a happy future.

This touching story of love and devotion is by Albert Bigelow Paine, and has been written expressly for ROMANCE.

MY COUSIN AMY.

HOWARD TAYLOR and I had been chums for years. Our offices were in the same building and we had fallen into a habit of lunching and dining together whenever my family were out of town for the summer. I had often wondered why he had not married, for he was a fine-looking man, upright, able, and prosperous. One night, when we were having an unusually intimate conversation, I ventured to ask him.

"You must have had a story," I said.

"Yes," he answered slowly, "I have had my story, and if it will not bore you—I warn you it is not cheerful—I will tell it to you.

"I was brought up on a farm," he continued, after a long pause. "My father was not well off, but was anxious that I should have an education, and strained every nerve to send me to the village academy, finally offering me a year at college.

"I was then eighteen years old. I had mastered the lower branches, and was thirsty for more. I eagerly accepted.

"When my year was up, I came home heart-sick to think that I must stop now, at the very threshold of accomplishment.

"My father had a cousin, also a farmer, whose land joined ours. The two had been always like brothers, and his daughter Amy had been the only sister I ever knew. She was a little younger than myself, rather small for her years, but well advanced in her studies and with the promise of beauty in her face.

"When I returned from college, I was astonished to see that in my brief absence she had become a woman, and the promise of beauty was fulfilled. I felt shy

toward her and she was no longer my little sister. Still, I went to see her quite as frequently as before, and summer evenings, when we sat out on the long porch, I held her hand while I told her of my dreams and ambitions, and how they must all come to nothing because of the lack of means. It never occurred to me that she, too, had plans and dreams. Like all young fellows, I was selfish, and thought that those around me must be interested only in my welfare.

"Still I was very glad when one evening she told me that she had obtained the district school for the winter, and her voice that night was so soft, and she seemed so happy, that I kissed her for the first time since my return, and on the way home I felt that I was really very much in love with my sweet cousin.

"Not long after this, my father one day surprised me with the information that he could give me another year at college, and a week or two later I bade them all good-bye—kissing my pretty cousin a little carelessly, perhaps, for I was so full of the delight of going that I forgot how much I was in love.

"Well, I worked hard at college, and had little time to think of those at home. However, I wrote twice to Amy, who answered and said she liked teaching and hoped I was getting along well with my work.

"When I came home the next summer, I thought it was for good, but my father advised me to begin reading law during my vacation, saying that he thought I might be able to finish my education and take a law course afterward, as had always been my desire.

"That summer it seemed to me that my cousin was more shy and more beautiful than ever. I did not have very much time for love-making, but I resolved that some day, when I had got a start in my profession, I would tell her of my love and take her away from the little farm-house to keep her near me always. She had given great satisfaction as a teacher and was to have the school again.

"My last year at college was the busiest of all, for I was now reading law during every spare moment, in

order to be ready for the course the following summer. I graduated at the close of the term, but did not go home, for the law class was to begin at once and money was too scarce for me to make an unnecessary journey.

"Amy wrote me a letter of congratulation, which she enclosed with one from my father, for there was nothing in it that a sister might not have written. I replied to it in a brotherly way—not sorry that we could be as brother and sister—for of course it would be a long time before I could think of a wife, and besides, after all, my cousin was only a little country girl.

"That fall I took my degree, and returned home for a week or two, preparatory to beginning the battle with fortune in the great city.

"I was twenty-one and full of hope. My education and my profession were completed. The world lay before me.

"I saw my cousin Amy nearly every day, but it seemed to me that she was less beautiful than formerly. She appeared paler and thinner, I thought; so I assumed a patronizing air, and told her that she was too fond of money and working too hard, for she was teaching now at the academy and studying French and Latin evenings at home. But she only laughed, and when I went away, she cried a little as she let me kiss her, and then I thought how good and pure she was, and could hardly keep back my own tears. But I was not as much in love as I had been at twenty. She was not as attractive, and, besides, my head was full of the future and the prospect of city life.

"Well, I left them and came to Chicago, a stranger in a strange city. For three years I had a hard fight, and no thought of a wife entered my head. I was very poor, and twice my father sent me money to keep away the wolf.

"By and by, I began to climb the ladder and felt that success was coming at last. Then sometimes I thought of Amy, and wondered if she had fitted herself to be the wife of a man who, as people said, was going to make his mark. I had heard from her only through

my parents, who had written to me regularly, but I knew that she was still teaching and unmarried.

"I determined now to pay a visit to my old home and come to a final decision as to my future. That night I received a telegram from my father. My cousin Amy was dead.

"My father met me at the station, and as we drove home, he told me what he could no longer conceal. It was with the money earned by my cousin that he had paid for my last two years at college. It was her earnings that had paid for my law course and that had been sent to keep me from want in the great city.

"Then, as I bowed my head in shame and anguish, he told me how for two years past she had been growing thinner and paler, they thought from over-study, and how a sudden attack had finished the work of destruction almost before they thought of danger.

"That day, as I stood by the coffin and looked at the quiet face, from which every vestige of beauty had been stripped for my sake, I said, 'For your sake, sweet cousin, I will live and die alone.'"

This was the story that Howard Taylor told me as we sat looking out over the water waiting for the boat to take us home. And sometimes, since, as I have thought of that big-hearted man going through life alone, I have wondered if Amy knows.

Perhaps there are some other men besides the "Jim" of this anonymous story to whom a visit to the old home would prove of mutual benefit.

HE VISITED HIS OLD HOME.

"HELLO, Jim! Where have you been lately?" shouted a broker the other evening to a portly, finely-dressed man in the corridor of the Fifth Avenue Hotel. The gentleman stopped, shook hands with his friend, and replied: "I've been home to see my old father and mother, for the first time in sixteen years, and I tell you, old man, I wouldn't have missed that visit for all my fortune."

"Kind o' good to visit your boyhood home, eh?"

"You bet. Sit down. I was just thinking about the old folks, and feel talkative. If you have a few moments to spare, sit down, light a cigar, and listen to the story of a rich man, who had almost forgotten his father and mother."

They sat down and the man told his story:

"How I came to visit my home happened in a curious way. Six weeks ago I went down to Fire Island, fishing. I had had a lunch put up for me, and you can imagine my astonishment when I opened the hamper to find a package of crackers wrapped up in a piece of the little, patent-inside, country weekly published at my home in Wisconsin. I read every word of it, advertisements and all. There was George Kellogg, who was a schoolmate of mine, advertising hams and salt pork, and another boy was postmaster. By George! it made me homesick, and I determined then and there to go home, and go home I did.

"In the first place I must tell you how I came to New York. I had a tiff with my father and left home. I finally turned up in New York with a dollar in my pocket. I got a job running a freight-elevator in the very house in which I am now a partner. My haste to

get rich drove the thought of my parents from me, and when I did think of them, the hard words that my father last spoke to me rankled in my bosom. Well, I went home. I tell you, John, my train seemed to creep. I was actually worse than a school-boy going home for vacation. At last we neared the town. Familiar sights met my eyes, and, upon my word, they filled with tears. There was Bill Lyman's red barn, just the same; but—great Scott! what were all of the other houses? We rode nearly a mile before coming to the station, passing many houses of which only an occasional one was familiar. The town had grown to ten times its size when I knew it. The train stopped and I jumped off. Not a face in sight that I knew, and I started down the platform to go home. In the office-door stood the station-agent. I walked up and said: 'Howdy, Mr. Collins?'

"He stared at me and replied: 'You've got the best of me, sir.'

"I told him who I was and what I had been doing in New York, and he didn't make any bones in talking to me. Said he: 'It's about time you came home. You in New York rich, and your father scratching gravel to get a bare living!'

"I tell you, John, it knocked me all in a heap. I thought my father had enough to live upon comfortably. Then a notion struck me. Before going home I telegraphed to Chicago to one of our correspondents there to send me $1,000 by first mail. Then I went into Mr. Collins's back office, got my trunk in there, and put on an old hand-me-down suit that I use for fishing and hunting. My plug hat I replaced by a soft one, took my valise in my hand, and went home. Somehow the place didn't look right. The currant-bushes had been dug up from the front yard, and the fence was gone. All the old locust trees had been cut down and young maple trees were planted. The house looked smaller somehow, too. But I went up to the front door and rang the bell. Mother came to the door and said: 'We don't wish to buy anything to-day, sir.'

"It didn't take me a minute to survey her from head to foot. Neatly-dressed, John, but a patch and a darn here and there, her hair streaked with gray, her face thin, drawn and wrinkled. Yet over her eyeglasses shone those good, honest, benevolent eyes. I stood staring at her, and then she began to stare at me. I saw the blood rush to her face, and with a great sob she threw herself upon me, and nervously clasped me about the neck, hysterically crying: 'It's Jimmy, it's Jimmy!'

"Then I cried, too, John. I just broke down and cried like a baby. She got me into the house, hugging and kissing me, and then she went to the back door and shouted, 'George!'

"Father called from the kitchen, 'What do you want, Car'line?'

"Then he came in. He knew me in a moment. He stuck out his hand and grasped mine, and said sternly: 'Well, young man, do you propose to behave yourself now?'

"He tried to put on a brave front, but he broke down. There we three sat like whipped school-children, all whimpering. At last supper time came and mother went out to prepare it. I went into the kitchen with her.

"'Where do you live, Jimmy?' she asked.

"'In New York,' I replied.

"'What are you workin' at now, Jimmy?'

"'I'm workin' in a drygoods store.'

"'Then I suppose you don't live very high, for I hear tell o' them city clerks what don't get enough money to keep body and soul together. So I'll just tell you, Jimmy, we've got nothin' but roast spareribs for supper. We ain't got any money now, Jimmy. We're poorer nor Job's turkey.'

"I told her I would be delighted with the spareribs, and to tell the truth, John, I haven't eaten a meal in New York that tasted as good as those crisp roasted spareribs did. I spent the evening playing checkers with father, while mother sat by telling me all about

their misfortunes, from old white Mooley getting drowned in the pond to father's signing a note for a friend and having to mortgage the place to pay it. The mortgage was due inside of a week and not a cent to meet it with—just $800. She supposed they would be turned out of house and home, but in my mind I supposed they wouldn't. At last nine o'clock came and father said: 'Jim, go out to the barn and see if Kit is all right. Bring in an armful of old shingles that are just inside the door and fill up the water-pail. Then we'll go off to bed and get up early and go a-fishing.'

"I didn't say a word, but I went out to the barn, bedded down the horse, broke up an armful of shingles, pumped up a pail of water, filled the woodbox, and then we all went to bed.

"Father called me at 4.30 in the morning, and while he was getting a cup of coffee, I skipped over to the depot cross-lots and got my best bass rod. Father took nothing but a trolling line and a spoon hook. He rowed the boat with the trolling line in his mouth, while I stood in the stern with a silver shiner rigged on. Now, John, I never saw a man catch fish as he did. To make a long story short, he caught four bass and five pickerel, and I never got a bite.

"At noon we went ashore and father went home, while I went to the post-office. I got a letter from Chicago with a check for $1,000 in it. With some trouble I got it cashed, getting paid in $5 and $10 bills, making quite a roll. I then got a roast joint of beef and a lot of delicacies, and had them sent home. After that I went visiting among my old schoolmates for two hours and went home. The joint was in the oven. Mother had put on her only silk dress and father had donned his Sunday-go-to-meeting clothes, none too good, either. This is where I played a joke on the old folks. Mother was in the kitchen watching the roast. Father was out to the barn, and I had a clear coast. I dumped the sugar out of the old blue bowl, put the thousand dollars in it and placed the cover

on again. At last supper was ready. Father asked a blessing over it, and he actually trembled when he stuck his knife in the roast.

"'We haven't had a piece of meat like this in five years, Jim,' he said, and mother put in with, 'And we haven't had any coffee in a year, only when we went a visitin'.'

"Then she poured out the coffee and lifted the cover of the sugar bowl, asking as she did so, 'How many spoonfuls, Jimmy?'

"Then she struck something that wasn't sugar. She picked up the bowl and peered into it. 'Aha, Master Jimmy, playin' your old tricks on your mammy, eh? Well, boys will be boys.'

"Then she gasped for breath. She saw it was money. She looked at me, then at father, and then with trembling fingers drew the great roll of bills out.

"Ha! ha! ha! I can see father now as he stood there then on tiptoe, with his knife in one hand, fork in the other, and his eyes fairly bulging out of his head. But it was too much for mother. She raised her eyes to heaven and said slowly, 'Put your trust in the Lord, for he will provide.'

"Then she fainted away. Well, John, there's not much more to tell. We threw water in her face and brought her to, and then we demolished that dinner, mother all the time saying, 'My boy Jimmy! My boy Jimmy!'

"I stayed home a month. I fixed up the place, paid off all the debts, had a good time and came back again to New York. I am going to send $50 home every week. I tell you, John, it's mighty nice to have a home."

John was looking steadily at the head of his cane. When he spoke, he took Jim by the hand and said: "Jim, old friend, what you have told me has affected me greatly. I haven't heard from my home way up in Maine for ten years. I'm going home to-morrow."

The following essentially characteristic story by Ludwig Tieck ranks among the German classics. The translation is that of Thomas Carlyle.

THE GOBLET.

THE forenoon bells were sounding from the high cathedral. Over the wide square in front of it were men and women walking to and fro, carriages rolling along, and priests proceeding to their various churches. Ferdinand was standing on the broad stair, with his eyes over the multitude, looking at them as they came up to attend the service. The sunshine glittered on the white stones; all were seeking shelter from the heat. He alone had stood for a long time leaning on a pillar, amid the burning beams, without regarding them; for he was lost in the remembrances which mounted up within his mind. He was calling back his bygone life; and inspiring his soul with the feeling which had penetrated all his being, and swallowed up every other wish in itself. At the same hour, in the past year, had he been standing here, looking at the women and the maidens coming to mass; with indifferent heart, and smiling face, he had viewed the variegated procession; many a kind look had roguishly met his, and many a virgin cheek had blushed; his busy eye had observed the pretty feet, how they mounted the steps, and how the wavering robes fell more or less aside, to let the dainty little ankles come to sight. Then a youthful form had crossed the square, clad in black; slender, and of noble mien, her eyes modestly cast down before her, carelessly she hovered up the steps with lovely grace; the silken robe lay round the fairest of forms, and rocked itself as in music about the moving limbs; she was mounting the highest step, when by chance she raised her head, and struck his eye with a ray of the purest azure. He was pierced as if by lightning. Her foot caught the robe; and

quickly as he darted toward her, he could not prevent her having, for a moment, in the most charming posture, lain kneeling at his feet. He raised her; she did not look at him, she was all one blush; nor did she answer his inquiry whether she was hurt. He followed her into the church: his soul saw nothing but the image of that form kneeling before him. Next day he visited the threshold of the church again; for him that spot was consecrated ground. He had been intending to pursue his travels; his friends were expecting him impatiently at home; but from henceforth his native country was here, his heart and its wishes were inverted. He saw her often, she did not shun him; yet it was but for a few separate and stolen moments; for her wealthy family observed her strictly, and still more a powerful and jealous bridegroom. They mutually confessed their love, but knew not what to do; for he was a stranger, and could offer his beloved no such splendid fortune as she was entitled to expect. He now felt his poverty; yet when he reflected on his former way of life, it seemed to him that he was passing rich; for his existence was rendered holy, his heart floated for ever in the fairest emotion; Nature was now become his friend, and her beauty lay revealed to him; he felt himself no longer alien from worship and religion; and he now crossed this threshold, and the mysterious dimness of the temple, with far other feelings than in former days of levity. He withdrew from his acquaintances, and lived only to love. When he walked through her street, and saw her at the window, he was happy for the day. He had often spoken to her in the dusk of the evening; her garden was adjacent to a friend's, who, however, did not know his secret. Thus a year had passed away.

All these scenes of his new existence again moved through his remembrance. He raised his eyes; that noble form was even then gliding over the square; she shone out of the confused multitude like a sun. A lovely music sounded in his longing heart; and as she approached, he retired into the church. He offered

her the holy water; her white fingers trembled as they touched his, she bowed with grateful kindness. He followed her, and knelt down near her. His whole heart was melting in sadness and love; it seemed to him as if, from the wounds of longing, his being were bleeding away in fervent prayers; every word of the priest went through him, every tone of the music poured new devotion into his bosom; his lips quivered, as the fair maiden pressed the crucifix of her rosary to her ruby mouth. How dim had been his apprehension of this Faith and this Love before! The priest elevated the Host, and the bell sounded; she bowed more humbly, and crossed her breast; and, like a flash, it struck through all his powers and feelings, and the image on the altar seemed alive, and the colored dimness of the windows as a light of paradise; tears flowed fast from his eyes, and allayed the swelling fervor of his heart.

The service was concluded. He again offered her the consecrated font; they spoke some words, and she withdrew. He stayed behind, in order to excite no notice; he looked after her till the hem of her garment vanished round the corner; and he felt like the wanderer, weary and astray, from whom, in the thick forest, the last gleam of the setting sun departs. He awoke from his dream, as an old withered hand slapped him on the shoulder, and some one called him by name. He started back, and recognized his friend, the testy old Albert, who lived apart from men, and whose solitary house was open to Ferdinand alone: "Do you remember our engagement?" said the hoarse husky voice. "Oh, yes," said Ferdinand: "and will you perform your promise to-day?"

"This very hour," replied the other, "if you like to follow me."

They walked through the city to a remote street, and there entered a large edifice. "To-day," said the old man, "you must push through with me into my most solitary chamber, that we may not be disturbed." They passed through many rooms, then along some stairs; they wound their way through passages: and

Ferdinand, who had thought himself familiar with the house, was now astonished at the multitude of apartments, and the singular arrangement of the spacious building; but still more that the old man, a bachelor, and without family, should inhabit it by himself, with a few servants, and never let out any part of the superfluous room to strangers. Albert at length unbolted the door, and said: "Now, here is the place." They entered a large, high chamber, hung round with red damask, which was trimmed with golden listings; the chairs were of the same stuff; and, through heavy red silk curtains covering the windows, came a purple light. "Wait a little," said the old man, and went into another room. Ferdinand took up some books: he found them to contain strange unintelligible characters, circles and lines, with many curious plates; and from the little he could read, they seemed to be works on alchemy; he was aware already that the old man had the reputation of a gold-maker. A lute was lying on the table, singularly overlaid with mother-of-pearl, and colored wood; and representing birds and flowers in very splendid forms. The star in the middle was a large piece of mother-of-pearl, worked in the most skilful manner into many intersecting circular figures, almost like the centre of a window in a Gothic church. "You are looking at my instrument," said Albert, coming back; "it is two hundred years old: I brought it with me as a memorial of my journey into Spain. But let us leave all that, and do you take a seat."

They sat down beside the table, which was likewise covered with a red cloth; and the old man placed upon it something which was carefully wrapped up. "From pity to your youth," he began, "I promised lately to predict to you whether you could ever become happy or not; and this promise I will in the present hour perform, though you hold the matter only as a jest. You need not be alarmed; for what I purpose will take place without danger; no dread invocations shall be made by me, nor shall any horrid apparition terrify your senses. The business I am on may fail in two ways:

either if you do not love so truly as you have been willing to persuade me; for then my labor is in vain, and nothing will disclose itself; or, if you shall disturb the oracle and destroy it by a useless question, or a hasty movement, should you leave your seat and dissipate the figure; you must therefore promise me to keep yourself quite still."

Ferdinand gave his word, and the old man unfolded from its cloths the packet he had placed on the table. It was a golden goblet, of very skilful and beautiful workmanship. Round its broad foot ran a garland of flowers, intertwined with myrtles, and various other leaves and fruits, worked out in high chasing with dim and with brilliant gold. A corresponding ring, but still richer, with figures of children, and wild little animals playing with them, or flying from them, wound itself about the middle of the cup. The bowl was beautifully turned; it bent itself back at the top as if to meet the lips; and within, the gold sparkled with a red glow. Old Albert placed the cup between him and the youth, whom he then beckoned to come nearer.

"Do you not feel something," said he, "when your eye loses itself in this splendor?"

"Yes," answered Ferdinand, "this brightness glances into my inmost heart; I might almost say I felt it like a kiss in my longing bosom."

"It is right, then!" said the old man. "Now let not your eyes wander any more, but fix them steadfastly on the glittering of this gold, and think as intensely as you can of the woman whom you love."

Both sat quiet for a while, looking earnestly upon the gleaming cup. Ere long, however, Albert, with mute gestures, began, at first slowly, then faster, and at last in rapid movements, to whirl his outstretched finger in a constant circle round the glitter of the bowl. Then he paused, and recommenced his circles in the opposite direction. After this had lasted for a little, Ferdinand began to think he heard the sound of music; it came as from without, in some distant street, but soon the tones approached; they quivered more dis-

tinctly through the air; and at last no doubt remained with him that they were flowing from the hollow of the cup. The music became stronger, and of such piercing power, that the young man's heart was throbbing to the notes, and tears were flowing from his eyes. Busily old Albert's hand now moved in various lines across the mouth of the goblet; and it seemed as if sparks were issuing from his fingers, and darting in forked courses to the gold, and tinkling as they met it. The glittering points increased; and followed, as if strung on threads, the movements of his finger to and fro; they shone with various hues, and crowded more and more together till they joined in unbroken lines. And now it seemed as if the old man, in the red dusk, were stretching a wondrous net over the gleaming gold; for he drew the beams this way and that at pleasure, and wove up with them the opening of the bowl; they obeyed him, and remained there like a cover, wavering to and fro, and playing into one another. Having so fixed them, he again described the circle round the rim; the music then moved off, grew fainter and fainter, and at last died away. While the tones departed, the sparkling net quivered to and fro as if in pain. In its increasing agitation it broke in pieces; and the beaming threads rained down in drops into the cup; but as the drops fell, there arose from them a ruddy cloud, which moved within itself in manifold eddies, and mounted over the brim like foam. A bright point darted with exceeding swiftness through the cloudy circle, and began to form the Image in the midst of it. On a sudden there looked out from the vapor as it were an eye; over this came a playing and curling as of golden locks; and soon there went a soft blush up and down the shadow, and Ferdinand beheld the smiling face of his beloved, the blue eyes, the tender cheeks, the fair red mouth. The head waved to and fro; rose clearer and more visible upon the slim white neck, and nodded toward the enraptured youth. Old Albert still kept casting circles round the cup; out of it emerged the glancing shoulders; and the fair

form mounted more and more from its golden couch, and bent in lovely kindness this way and that. Ferdinand fancied he felt the breath, as the beloved form bent waving towards him, and almost touched him with its glowing lips; in his rapture he forgot his promise and himself; he started up and clasped that ruby mouth to him with a kiss, and meant to seize those lovely arms, and lift the enrapturing form from its golden prison. Instantly a violent trembling quivered through the lovely shape; the head and body broke away as in a thousand lines; and a rose was lying at the bottom of the goblet, in whose redness that sweet smile still seemed to play. The longing young man caught it and pressed it to his lips; and in his burning ardor it withered and melted into air.

"Thou hast kept thy promise badly," said the old man, with an angry tone; "thou hast none but thyself to blame."

He again wrapped up the goblet, drew aside the curtains, and opened a window: the clear daylight broke in; and Ferdinand, in sadness, and with many fruitless excuses, left old Albert still in anger.

In an agitated mood, he hastened through the streets of the city. Without the gate, he sat down beneath the trees. She had told him in the morning that she was to go that night, with some relations, to the country. Intoxicated with love, he rose, he sat, he wandered in the wood: that fair kind form was still before him, as it flowed and mounted from the glowing gold; he looked that she would now step forth to meet him in the splendor of her beauty, and again that loveliest image broke away in pieces from his eyes; and he was indignant at himself that, by his restless passion and the tumult of his senses, he should have destroyed the shape, and perhaps his hopes, forever.

As the walk, in the afternoon, became crowded, he withdrew deeper into the thickets; but he still kept the distant highway in his eye; and every coach that issued from the gate was carefully examined by him.

The night approached. The setting sun was throw-

ing forth its red splendor, when from the gate rushed out the richly-gilded coach, gleaming with a fiery brightness in the glow of evening. He hastened towards it. Her eye had already seized him. Kindly and smilingly she leaned from the window; he caught her soft salutation and signal; he was standing by the coach, her full look fell on his, and as she drew back to move away, the rose which had adorned her bosom flew out, and lay at his feet. He lifted it, and kissed it; and he felt as if it presaged to him that he should not see his loved one any more, that now his happiness had faded away from him forever.

Hurried steps were passing up stairs and down; the whole house was in commotion; all was bustle and tumult, preparing for the great festivities of the morrow. The mother was the gladdest and most active; the bride heeded nothing, but retired into her chamber to meditate upon her changing destiny. The family were still looking for their elder son, the captain, with his wife; and for two elder daughters, with their husbands: Leopold, the younger, was maliciously busied in increasing the disorder, and deepening the tumult; perplexing all, while he pretended to be furthering it. Agatha, his still unmarried sister, was in vain endeavoring to make him reasonable, and persuade him simply to do nothing, and to let the rest have peace; but her mother said: "Never mind him and his folly; for today a little more or less of it amounts to nothing; only this I beg of one and all of you, that as I have so much to think about already, you would trouble me with no fresh tidings, unless it be of something that especially concerns us. I care not whether any one have let some china fall, whether one spoon or two spoons are wanting, whether any of the stranger servants have been breaking windows; with all such freaks as these, I beg you would not vex me by recounting them. Were these days of tumult over, we will reckon matters; not till then."

"Bravely spoken, mother!" cried her son; "these

sentiments are worthy of a governor. And if it chance that any of the maids should break her neck; the cook get tipsy, or set the chimney on fire; the butler, for joy, let all the malmsey run upon the floor, or down his throat, you shall not hear a word of such small tricks. If, indeed, an earthquake were to overset the house, that my dear mother, could not be kept secret."

"When will he leave his folly!" said the mother. "What must thy sisters think, when they find thee every jot as riotous as when they left thee two years ago?"

"They must do justice to my force of character," said Leopold, "and grant that I am not so changeable as they or their husbands, who have altered so much within these few years, and so little to their advantage."

The bridegroom now entered, and inquired for the bride. Her maid was sent to call her. "Has Leopold made my request to you, my dear mother?" said he.

"I did, forsooth!" said Leopold. "There is such confusion here among us, not one of them can think a reasonable thought."

The bride entered and the young pair joyfully saluted one another. "The request I meant," continued the bridegroom, "is this: That you would not take it ill, if I should bring another guest into your house, which, in truth, is full enough already."

"You are aware yourself," replied the mother, "that extensive as it is, I could scarcely find another chamber."

"Notwithstanding, I have partly managed it already," cried Leopold; "I have had the large apartment furnished up."

"Why, that is quite a miserable place," replied the mother; "for many years it has been nothing but a lumber-room."

"But it is splendidly repaired," said Leopold; "and our friend, for whom it is intended, does not mind such matters, he desires nothing but our love. Besides, he has no wife, and likes to be alone; it is the very place for him. We have had enough of trouble in persuading

him to come, and show himself again among his fellow-creatures."

"Not your dismal conjuror and gold-maker, certainly?" cried Agatha.

"No other," said the bridegroom, "if you will still call him so."

"Then do not let him, mother," said the sister. "What should a man like that do here? I have seen him on the street with Leopold, and I was positively frightened at his face. The old sinner, too, almost never goes to church; he loves neither God nor man; and it cannot come to good to bring such infidels under the roof, on a solemnity like this. Who knows what may be the consequence!"

"To hear her talk!" said Leopold, in anger. "Thou condemnest without knowing him; and because the cut of his nose does not please thee, and he is no longer young and handsome, thou concludest him a wizard, and a servant of the Devil."

"Grant a place in your house, dear mother," said the bridegroom, "to our old friend, and let him take a part in our general joy. He seems, my dear Agatha, to have endured much suffering, which has rendered him distrustful and misanthropic; he avoids all society; his only exceptions are Leopold and myself. I owe him much; it was he that first gave my mind a good direction; nay, I may say, it is he alone that has rendered me perhaps worthy of my Julia's love."

"He lends me all his books," continued Leopold; "and, what is more, his old manuscripts; and what is more still, his money, on my bare word. He is a man of the most Christian turn, my little sister. And who knows, when thou hast seen him better, whether thou wilt not throw off thy coyness, and take a fancy to him, ugly as he now appears to thee?"

"Well, bring him to us," said the mother; "I have had to hear so much of him from Leopold already, that I have a curiosity to be acquainted with him. Only you must answer for it, that I cannot lodge him better."

Meantime strangers were announced. They were

members of the family, the married daughters, and the officer; they had brought their children with them. The good old lady was delighted to behold her grandsons; all was welcoming, and joyful talk; and Leopold and the bridegroom, having also given and received their greeting, went away to seek their ancient melancholic friend.

The latter lived most part of the year in the country, about a league from town; but he also kept a little dwelling for himself in a garden near the gate. Here, by chance, the young men had become acquainted with him. They now found him in a coffee-house, where they had previously agreed to meet. As the evening had come on, they brought him, after some little conversation, directly to the house.

The stranger met a kindly welcome from the mother; the daughters stood a little more aloof from him. Agatha especially was shy, and carefully avoided his looks. But the first general compliments were scarcely over, when the old man's eye appeared to settle on the bride, who had entered the apartment later; he seemed as if transported, and it was observed that he was struggling to conceal a tear. The bridegroom rejoiced in his joy, and happening sometime after to be standing with him beside the window, he took his hand, and asked him: "Now, what think you of my lovely Julia? Is she not an angel?"

"O my friend!" replied the old man, with emotion, "such grace and beauty I have never seen; or rather, I should say (for that expression was not just), she is so fair, so ravishing, so heavenly, that I feel as if I had long known her; as if she were to me, utter stranger though she is, the most familiar form of my imagination, some shape which had always been an inmate of my heart."

"I understand you," said the young man: "yes, the truly beautiful, the great and sublime, when it overpowers us with astonishment and admiration, still does not surprise us as a thing foreign, never heard of, never seen; but, on the other hand, our own inmost nature in

such moments becomes clear to us, our deepest remembrances are awakened, our dearest feelings made alive."

The stranger, during supper, mixed but little in the conversation; his looks were fixed on the bride, so earnestly and constantly, that she at last became embarrassed and alarmed. The captain told of a campaign which he had served in; the rich merchant, of his speculations and the bad times; the country gentleman of the improvements which he meant to make in his estate.

Supper being done, the bridegroom took his leave. The company dispersed, and Leopold conducted the stranger to his room.

"You will excuse us," said he, as they went along, "for having been obliged to lodge you rather far away, and not so comfortably as our mother wished; but you see, yourself, how numerous our family is, and more relations are to come to-morrow. For one thing, you will not run away from us; there is no finding of your course through this enormous house."

They went through several passages, and Leopold at last took leave, and bade his guest good-night. The servant placed two wax-lights on the table; then asked the stranger whether he should help him to undress, and as the latter waived his help in that particular, he also went away, and the stranger found himself alone.

"How does it chance, then," said he, walking up and down, "that this Image springs so vividly from my heart to-day? I forgot the long past, and thought I saw herself. I was again young, and her voice sounded as of old; I thought I was awakening from a heavy dream; but no, I am now awake, and those fair moments were but a sweet delusion."

He was too restless to sleep; he looked at some pictures on the walls, and then round on the chamber. "To-day," cried he, "all is so familiar to me, I could almost fancy I had known this house and this apartment of old." He tried to settle his remembrances, and lifted some large books which were standing in a corner. As he turned their leaves, he shook his head. A lute-case was leaning on the wall; he opened it, and found a

strange old instrument time-worn and without the strings. "No, I am not mistaken!" cried he, in astonishment; "this lute is too remarkable; it is the Spanish lute of my long-departed friend, old Albert! Here are his magic books; this is the chamber where he raised for me that blissful vision; the red of the tapestry is faded, its golden hem is become dim; but strangely vivid in my heart is all pertaining to those hours. It was for this the fear went over me as I was coming hither, through these long complicated passages where Leopold conducted me. O Heaven! On this very table did the Shape rise budding forth, and grow up as if watered and refreshed by the redness of the gold. The same image smiled upon me here, which has almost driven me crazy in the hall to-night; in that hall where I have walked so often in trustful speech with Albert!"

He undressed, but slept very little. Early in the morning he was up, and looking at the room again; he opened the window, and the same gardens and buildings were lying before him as of old, only many other houses had been built since then. "Forty years have vanished," sighed he, "since that afternoon; and every day of those bright times has a longer life than all the intervening space."

He was called to the company. The morning passed in varied talk: at last the bride entered in her marriage dress. As the old man noticed her, he fell into a state of agitation, such that every one observed it. They proceeded to the church, and the marriage ceremony was performed. The party was again at home, when Leopold inquired: "Now, mother, how do you like our friend, the good morose old gentleman?"

"I had figured him, by your description," said she, "much more frightful; he is mild and sympathetic, and might gain from one an honest trust in him."

"Trust?" cried Agatha; "in these burning frightful eyes, these thousandfold wrinkles, that pale sunk mouth, that strange laugh of his, which looks and sounds so mockingly? No; God keep me from such

friends! If evil spirits ever take the shape of men, they must assume some shape like this."

"Perhaps a younger and more handsome one," replied the mother; "but I cannot recognize the good old man in thy description. One easily observes that he is of a violent temperament, and has inured himself to lock up his feelings in his own bosom; perhaps, too, as Leopold was saying, he may have encountered many miseries; so he is grown mistrustful, and has lost that simple openness, which is especially the portion of the happy."

The rest of the party entered, and broke off their conversation. Dinner was served up; and the stranger sat between Agatha and the rich merchant. When the toasts were beginning, Leopold cried out: "Now, stop a little, worthy friends; we must have the golden goblet down for this, then let it travel round."

He was rising, but his mother beckoned him to keep his seat: "Thou wilt not find it," said she, "for the plate is all stowed elsewhere." She walked out rapidly to seek it herself.

"How brisk and busy is our good old lady still!" observed the merchant. "See how nimbly she can move, with all her breadth and weight, and reckoning sixty by this time of day. Her face is always bright and joyful, and to-day she is particularly happy, for she sees herself made young again in Julia."

The stranger gave assent, and the lady entered with the goblet. It was filled with wine, and began to circulate, each toasting what was dearest and most precious to him. Julia gave the welfare of her husband, he the love of his fair Julia; and thus did every one as it became his turn. The mother lingered, as the goblet came to her.

"Come, quick with it," said the captain, somewhat hastily and rudely; "we know, you reckon all men faithless, and not one among them worthy of a woman's love. What, then, is dearest to you?"

His mother looked at him, while the mildness of her brow was on a sudden overspread with angry serious-

ness. "Since my son," said she, "knows me so well, and can judge my mind so rigorously, let me be permitted *not* to speak what I was thinking of, and let him endeavor, by a life of constant love, to falsify what he gives out as my opinion." She pushed the goblet on, without drinking, and the company was for a while embarrassed and disturbed.

"It is reported," said the merchant, in a whisper, turning to the stranger, "that she did not love her husband; but another, who proved faithless to her. She was then, it seems, the finest woman in the city."

When the cup reached Ferdinand, he gazed upon it with astonishment; for it was the very goblet out of which old Albert had called forth to him the lovely shadow. He looked in upon the gold, and the waving of the wine; his hand shook; it would not have surprised him, if from the magic bowl that glowing form had again mounted up, and brought with it his vanished youth. "No!" said he, after some time, half-aloud, "it is wine that is gleaming here!"

"Ay, what else?" cried the merchant, laughing. "Drink and be merry."

A thrill of terror passed over the old man; he pronounced the name "Francesca" in a vehement tone, and set the goblet to his lips. The mother cast upon him an inquiring and astonished look.

"Whence is this bright goblet?" said Ferdinand, who also felt ashamed of his embarrassment.

"Many years ago, long ere I was born," said Leopold, "my father bought it, with this house and all its furniture, from an old solitary bachelor; a silent man, whom the neighbors thought a dealer in the Black Art."

The stranger did not say that he had known this old man; for his whole being was too much perplexed, too like an enigmatic dream, to let the rest look into it, even from afar.

The cloth being withdrawn he was left alone with the mother, as the young ones had retired to make ready for the ball. "Sit down by me," said the

mother; "we will rest, for our dancing years are past; and if it is not rude, allow me to inquire whether you have seen our goblet elsewhere, or what it was that moved you so intensely?"

"O my lady," said the old man, "pardon my foolish violence and emotion; but ever since I crossed your threshold, I feel as if I were no longer myself; every moment I forget that my head is gray, that the hearts which loved me are dead. Your beautiful daughter, who is now celebrating the gladdest day of her existence, is so like a maiden whom I knew and adored in my youth, that I could reckon it a miracle. Like, did I say? No, she is not like; it is she herself! In this house, too, I have often been; and once I became acquainted with this cup in a manner I shall not forget."

Here he told her his adventure. "On the evening of that day," concluded he, "in the park, I saw my loved one for the last time, as she was passing in her coach. A rose fell from her bosom; this I gathered; she herself was lost to me, for she proved faithless, and soon after married."

"God in Heaven!" cried the lady, violently moved, and starting up, "thou art not Ferdinand?"

"It is my name," replied he.

"I am Francesca," said the lady.

They sprang forward to embrace, then started suddenly back. Each viewed the other with investigating looks: both strove again to evolve from the ruins of time those lineaments which of old they had known and loved in one another; and as, in dark tempestuous nights, amid the flight of black clouds, there are moments when solitary stars ambiguously twinkle forth, to disappear next instant, so to these two was there shown now and then from the eyes, from the brow and lips, the transitory gleam of some well-known feature; and it seemed as if their Youth stood in the distance, weeping smiles. He bowed down, and kissed her hand, while two big drops rolled from his eyes. They then embraced each other cordially.

"Is thy wife dead?" inquired she.

"I was never married," sobbed the other.

"Heavens!" cried she, wringing her hands, "then it is I who have been faithless! But no, not faithless. On returning from the country, where I stayed two months, I heard from every one, thy friends as well as mine, that thou wert long ago gone home, and married in thy own country. They showed me the most convincing letters, they pressed me vehemently, they profited by my despondency, my indignation; and so it was that I gave my hand to another, a deserving husband; but my heart and my thoughts were always thine."

"I never left this town," said Ferdinand; "but after a while I heard that thou wert married. They wished to part us, and they have succeeded. Thou art a happy mother; I live in the past, and all thy children I will love as if they were my own. But how strange that we should never once have met!"

"I seldom went abroad," said she; "and as my husband took another name, soon after we were married, from a property which he inherited, thou couldst have no suspicion that we were so near together."

"I avoided men," said Ferdinand, "and lived for solitude. Leopold is almost the only one that has attracted me, and led me out amongst my fellows. O my beloved friend, it is like a frightful spectre-story, to think how we lost, and have again found each other!"

As the young people entered, the two were dissolved in tears, and in the deepest emotion. Neither of them told what had occurred, the secret seemed too holy. But ever after, the old man was the friend of the house; and Death alone parted these two beings, who had found each other so strangely, to re-unite them in a short time, beyond the power of separation.

An important hint as to the treatment of burglars is contained in this true story, which has been written for ROMANCE by E. A. Rendle.

A BLIND MAN'S ADVENTURE.

IT was the week of the races, and the town was crowded. A gentleman was driving in a cab from one hotel to another vainly trying to secure a room for the night. It was a dark, raw evening, and the rain was falling heavily; the cab-driver whipped up his horse impatiently, and the animal, startled at the same instant by some indistinct object near it, shied violently, the cab struck against a lamp-post and was overturned.

A crowd soon gathered; the driver was found to be badly injured and was carried to the nearest doctor. Then the horse was unharnessed, and just as the people were about to set the carriage up again, a voice inside exclaimed:

"Be careful, please."

The hearers were astonished, having supposed that the cab was empty, and when they opened the door which was uppermost, the same voice said quietly:

"I am not hurt, but I shall need help. I am blind!"

A thrill of sympathy spread through the crowd, and the unfortunate gentleman was soon extricated from his awkward position. He was found to be uninjured beyond a few slight bruises, and having regained possession of his valise and umbrella, he asked to be taken to the nearest hotel. Accordingly, he was escorted to the Durham, which was but a stone's throw from the scene of the accident. Here again, however, his request met with a refusal; there was not a room to spare.

The traveller then sent for the proprietor of the house, related the unusual circumstances of his case, and described the accident which had just taken place.

"Any shake-down will do for me," he added, "for my blindness makes the appearance of a room quite

immaterial. I always prefer, however, to be on the ground floor, on account of my helplessness in case of fire."

The proprietor hesitated a moment, and then said thoughtfully:

"There is a small back room on the ground floor, just off the office, where the safe used to stand. It is entirely unfurnished, but I can have a cot-bed put there, if you think you can be comfortable."

Mr. Clarkson, the blind traveller, accepted the offer joyfully, for he was weary and longed to rest. He went to bed early and slept heavily for several hours.

Toward two o'clock, however, he became wakeful. He had been a good deal shaken up by the overturning of the cab, and his nerves, always sensitive, were suffering from the effects of the shock. After tossing about for some time, trying in vain to sleep again, he gave up the attempt and resolved to quiet his nerves by writing letters. This was his usual consolation on sleepless nights, and he always kept under his pillow a letter-pad, especially prepared for the use of the blind, with brass wires running across the paper to guide the hand from line to line.

He sat up in bed and wrote for an hour in the pitchy darkness. The house was perfectly quiet, and he was just thinking that it was an advantage to get through his letters without any fear of interruption, when his quick ear caught the sound of a closing door, and then footsteps advancing toward his room. He knew there was no other room in the corridor, for it had been explained to him that the communication with the office had been closed, and the long passage led nowhere else. He listened attentively, and his acute sense of hearing distinguished the stealthy tread of a man who fears detection.

"A thief," he thought, "who thinks the safe is still here."

The door of his room was unlocked, and he had no weapon of defence—an important matter in these days of armed burglars. He resolved to continue writing

and to trust to the unusual appearance he must present, to disconcert the would-be robber. Meanwhile, the footsteps, creeping, gliding, stopping every now and then, came nearer till they reached the door. Noiselessly the handle was turned. Only a cold current of air told the occupant of the bed that the door was opened. Mechanically he continued writing, the occasional hitting of his pencil against the wire bars being the only sound he could discern. An involuntary tremor ran through him as he pictured vividly to himself a man with a bull's-eye lantern turned on him scanning him and his few possessions.

Suddenly, with unnecessary energy, he tore the sheet he had been writing on, off the pad. In that dead silence a pistol-shot could hardly have been more startling. There was an unmistakable cry of terror, something fell to the floor with a clattering noise, and the flurry of flying footsteps down the hall was followed by the banging of the door leading into the street.

The night-clerk heard the commotion, and hastily summoning assistance made his way to Mr. Clarkson's room. What he saw there startled him. It was a tall, ghostly-looking white figure sitting up in bed, the hands moving as if performing some act of witchcraft, while the eyes gazed steadily into the darkness as if they could read secrets there which ordinary mortals feared to trace!

Mr. Clarkson laughed when he heard this description of himself, and in his turn related his impression of his nocturnal visitor. His suspicions were evidently correct, for just inside the room was found a felt bag containing some mysterious-looking tools.

The proprietor of the hotel remarked that it might be a paying investment to hire Mr. Clarkson at a large salary to scare off burglars.

Several morals may be derived from this amusing fairy-story by Rudolph Baumbach. It is translated for ROMANCE by K. R. Bowen.

THE DONKEY'S SPRING.

In a green valley, surrounded by high hills, rises a cool, rich spring, called "The Donkey's Spring." The spring is inclosed by a wall, and a little roof, on the highest point of which is a weather-vane in the shape of an ass, covers it. In summer a great many pale city girls, under the protection of careful mothers and aunts, stand on the brink of the spring and drink its cool water; and not only invalids, but healthy, strong men with black beards and sunburned cheeks, drink with gratitude the healing water of the spring. An old soldier, who for thirty years has come and gone with the swallows; a young, poetical Fraulein, with long yellow locks; a widow, in deep mourning; and also a magician, who makes the gold disappear, and tells the numbers of the cards—all these people gather together at the brink, in summer time, in order to drink of the healing waters of the spring. But halt! we must not forget the landlady of "The Golden Goose," to whom we are indebted for this tale, and who makes rich and poor alike comfortable at her inn. Over the origin of the name there has been much dispute; one says one thing and one another. However, this is the story as told by the landlady of "The Golden Goose."

Many, many years ago, when the mightiest trees of the forest were as little acorns in their brown shells, man knew nothing of the healing power of the spring. Those who stood on the edge, and drank the cool water, were mostly beasts of the woods, and charcoal-burners, who praised it, and the beasts did the same in their way. One day two creatures stood at the spring, one on this

side, and one on the other. He was a donkey, and she a goose in the first bloom of youth. They silently greeted each other, and drank their fill. Then the donkey raised his head and said: "Young lady, may I accompany you?"

She nodded, and they stepped forth side by side and spoke of the weather. They had already gone a little way when the donkey stopped and said again: "Fraulein, which way do you go?"

The goose sighed, and said sadly, "Which way do I go? Alas, I am the most unfortunate goose under the sun!"

And all that the donkey could do, out of politeness, was to ask her to tell him her story.

"I am called Adelaide," said the goose, "and I come of a good family. My ancestor was one of the holy geese in the Capitol. Of course, you know the story, young man?"

"Y-e-e-s," said the donkey slowly. In fact, he had not heard it, but he did not wish to display his ignorance.

"Another of my ancestors," continued Adelaide, "stood in friendly relations to the holy Martin, and, in fact, died for him. But I will pass over that part of my story and speak of myself. I first saw the light of day in a barn-yard, where my mother lived as brood-goose. I had eleven brothers and sisters, but I was my mother's darling, for then in every family the youngest was the most petted."

"Just the way with us!" said the donkey.

"I was universally admired," continued Adelaide, "and spent the happy years of my childhood playing in the village duck-pond. One day there came a dreadful-looking man to the farm, with a bundle of goods on his back, a long, hooked nose and small, beady, black eyes, and I, my mother's darling, was sold to this man, in exchange for a bit of ribbon. Now comes the sad and dreary part of my story: I was put in a dark pen and fed on bran-balls. With horror I perceived myself to be growing fatter and fatter, and I knew well to what dreadful end I was coming."

Here the donkey bestowed on her a sympathetic look, for which she gratefully thanked him and proceeded: "In the dark, dark, night I heard a queer noise at the bars of the pen, and saw two bright eyes gleaming on me. For one moment, my heart stood still, and then I gave one bound and found myself free. My wings brought me here to the forest, and I discovered not far off the cool spring where I met you, charming sir. But I know not what I shall do when the freezing winter comes."

Adelaide was silent.

"My history," said the donkey, "resembles yours somewhat. Notice the black stripe running down my back. That shows that I am descended from the palm donkey, and my branch of the family came in Noah's Ark; but my greatest ancestor of all, was the famous donkey of Balaam. I was sold to a miller, who put bags of grain on my back, and whose men abused me so roughly that I was forced to fly. I broke away, and after wandering a long way found myself in this wood by the spring, and I thought to live as a wild-ass in the winter."

The donkey and the goose eventually built themselves each a little house, and dwelt in them during the winter. She was sad and happy by turns; happy, because she saw the donkey daily; sad, because she could not marry him.

"Oh, that I had been born a donkey," poor Adelaide would cry; and, "If I were only a gander!" the donkey would add.

Thus the weeks flew by. The goose lost her pretty fresh color, and her eyes grew sad.

Now there lived in the forest, in the hollow of a tree, an old owl, and to her the animals were wont to go for advice. To her, therefore, went the donkey, and told his story. When she had heard it, she cried, "I cannot help you, but wait for Midsummer's Day, when the white Wish-Lady always comes to the spring. Tell your story to her, and when she has heard it, she may help you."

So the donkey went back to his home, and resolved to wait.

Now it happened that Adelaide had also heard of the Wish-Lady, and had resolved, like her friend, to try and seek her aid.

On the morning of Midsummer's Day, Boldewin the donkey arose very early and took his way to the spring to wait for the Wish-Lady. She did not keep him waiting long, but soon came flying along in her dress of swan's-down, and, alighting at the spring, she flung it off and jumped into the cool water. The donkey did not wish to disturb her, so he waited with great patience until she had finished and come up out of the water. Then he stepped up to her and told his desire. She listened in silence, and when he had done, "That is a hard wish," she said slowly; "but I can and will do it for you. Come here to-morrow morning with seven leaves of the goose-flower and, just as the sun comes up, dip yourself in the spring three times."

The donkey did as he was told, and came up a beautiful white gander. Quickly he hastened to the abode of his beloved Adelaide.

"Adelaide, my darling Adelaide!" called he. "Where are you?"

"Here, my dearest!" said a voice behind him, and, turning quickly, he beheld a pretty little donkey, with large, soft eyes. They stared at each other a minute, and then Adelaide said, "Oh, I am a donkey!"

Boldewin replied, "And I am a gander!"

After bewailing themselves, they took counsel together as to the best thing to do, and came to the conclusion that they had better go on living as they had done till the Wish-Lady came again.

The time flew by, and at last Midsummer's Day arrived. Hand in hand, they sought the Wish-Lady and explained to her their story.

"That is a bad thing," said she. "However, I should like very much to grant you the favor, and will change the gander into a young man, and the donkey into a young lady. Shall it be?"

Adelaide and Boldewin said, "Yes," in one breath. The Wish-Lady murmured some magic spell, and told them to dip their heads in the water. They did so, and when they came up, the donkey was changed to a pretty young girl, with red lips and yellow locks, and the gander into a fine young man, with a black mustache and red cheeks. Then they thanked the good Wish-Lady and kissed her hand, and she flew away.

Boldewin built a house, and there they lived happily, with many little boys and girls of their own. When Boldewin was an old man, and death was approaching, he called his eldest son and told him this story as I have told it to you, and named the house "The Golden Goose," and the spring "The Donkey's Spring," and ever afterward their descendants were the landladies and landlords of "The Golden Goose."

Elizabeth, Queen of Roumania, wrote this sad story, which might have been a leaf from her own experience, so vividly is the love and misery of these young lives pictured. It was translated from the German for *Temple Bar*.

A TRAGEDY OF LOVE.

THEY sat side by side beneath the flowery hedgerow, looking at one another with great eyes, and nodding their heads emphatically.

"Yes," said the boy, "grandmother knows well enough. She says my mother was a great sinner, and I must pray all my life long, so that she may not go to heli, but pass through the fires of purgatory to heaven."

"It would be beautiful, Ralph, if you should be a priest! Then I would hold the taper for you, and mother would make me a white frock, and the choir would sing in the church. It would be splendid!"

"But then, I can't marry you, Edith!"

"Oh! that doesn't matter. I can be a nun. I should not marry any one else."

"And I will come and live with you and keep house for you," cried a somewhat bigger girl, whose voice was heard over the hedge.

"You, Bertha? Grandmother says you must be a nun, and I must be a priest."

"What? everlasting singing and praying—not I! I have hardly any voice, and my knees don't bend easily! I am as fit to be a nun as this dragon-fly! I want to hustle about and have lots of pleasure!"

"But a priest's sister must be grave and steady," said Edith, nodding her head so that her fair curls fell over her face.

Ralph looked at her quietly and said, "Edith, you are quite pretty!" Bertha's lip curled, she snatched a piece of hawthorn blossom to smell. "Faugh! it is a horrid smell!" cried she, turning up her nose, and throwing it away hastily.

"Poor flowers!" said Edith, picking them up and putting them in her bodice. Edith's voice was low and clear like a silver bell; Bertha's was deep and expressive; and Ralph spoke in the same musical tones that enchanted the ladies every Sunday in the church choir. Bertha sat pulling up the bits of grass and biting them, and at last took to killing insects in order to suck out their honey.

"Fie, Bertha," said Ralph, "how can you be so disgusting! You know how angry grandmother would be."

"Well, what then? I shall do as I like. Does grandmother ever scold me? She knows very well I would not stand that. She is fond of me because she says I am like what she was when she was young. I look like a French girl. Where does grandmother come from?"

"From Provence," said Ralph.

"Ah, yes. She taught me the songs my father used to sing."

They met their grandmother on the steps of their own house, just returning from church in her heavy cloth gown and yellow head-dress, carrying her prayer-book, which sparkled with gold and inlaid stones like her handsome necklace. She had the same piercing black eyes as Bertha, and a hooked nose; her figure was tall and thin, and her carriage erect and stately. Every one was afraid of her except Bertha, whom she always treated kindly, while for Ralph she had seldom a civil word.

"Come on," said she to Edith; "you must say good-by to Ralph. He must now go to the monastery to school, and will not often come home."

When he did come home for the holidays, he and Edith were stiff and strange to each other, but they soon got over that feeling, and wandered about the woods and fields together as they did when children. Then the looking forward to these holidays came to have a wonderful charm, and they counted the days for months beforehand. But at last came a longer separa-

tion, when Ralph was to prepare for his first ordination. Meanwhile Bertha did not develop so pleasantly; her grandmother had given way to her overbearing temper so long, that at last she ceased to attempt to bridle it. It was no great matter to her if her granddaughter's tongue were rather sharp—people richly deserved all she said. Bertha was much more clever than other people; of course they would be envious, and it was better that they should be somewhat afraid of her. Her grandmother rejoiced also over Bertha's extraordinary beauty, and all the more that it was of a warm southern character. "When my granddaughter loves, it will be passionately!" said she smiling. Edith had much to put up with from her friend, but she was gentle and patient; what would she not have borne from Ralph's sister? She was sent into the town by her mother oftener than she liked, especially since the arrival there of a fine young fellow named Tassilo, the son of a merchant, who came ostensibly to visit another merchant, but in reality, so it was said, to find himself a rich wife. Bertha was pointed out to him as the one he was to fall in love with, and when he first caught sight of her bright black eyes, he thought it would be no difficult matter to do so. Bertha made fun of his fair hair, his fine moustache, his blue eyes, and she laughed at his smooth, neat silk stockings and his many fine suits of clothes; but she hid herself where she could see him as he rode by, and blushed when she met him.

"My daughter too is not ugly!" thought Edith's mother, and she dressed her carefully in a gown of gray wool with a black velvet pocket suspended by fine chains through which the gown was drawn up, showing the blue petticoat beneath. The bodice fitted closely to her delicate figure, and the points of the tight sleeves partly covered her hands. Above the bodice the chemise was pleated closely around her fair white throat, and was fastened under her chin with a little frill. Her waving locks were unconfined, in spite of the remarks of the neighbors, who thought they ought to have been twisted up in a knot. Edith had no suspicion of her mother's

secret wishes, and ran off merrily enough to meet Bertha, but she was somewhat embarrassed when she found herself closely observed by the much-talked-of handsome Tassilo, who was said by all the town to be going to marry "Satan's imp," as they called Bertha. In the course of the afternoon Tassilo paid a good deal of attention to Edith, and Bertha then began to use her sharp tongue to make fun of him, but in this contest she often came off the worst, for he parried her attacks skilfully and turned the whole into a skirmish of pleasantries in which even she could only give and take a little now and then. After a time Edith heard Tassilo ask Bertha aside, "Who is your young friend?" and Bertha answered, "She is a poor girl. Her mother is a widow and hardly knows how to bring her up, so we often have the little thing here to dinner. She is going to be a nun."

"Poor child!" said Tassilo, looking at her with a sympathizing glance. Edith felt the look he gave her, although she had almost turned her back to him, for she stood in front of Bertha's grandmother to hold the yarn for her to wind, which, however, became entangled, and the old lady was so much engaged in tugging at it angrily that she neither heard what was said nor observed Edith's heightened color nor the tears that stood in her eyes. As soon as she possibly could, Edith took leave and hastened to tell her mother of the cruel words that had been said. "You won't let me go there any more, mother, surely?" Her mother, however, did not take that view of matters, but said it was good for people to be patient and hear such things said without taking any notice of them.

The parting day came at last; Ralph took leave of his grandmother and Bertha, who were, however, to follow him in a short time to be present at his ordination. Then he went to find Edith.

"Child," said he, "you have been the only bright and beautiful part of my life—the only thing that would have chained me to the world, had I dared to admit the idea; but the voice that summons me must be obeyed. I have no choice. Remain, my Edith,

pure and holy as you are, so that I may ever dare to think of you as a saint! My one only friend, Edith!"

She was so agitated that she could only press his hand, which she held between both her own. At last she whispered: "I rejoice for you, and I will pray for you always, now, and when I am a nun! for I love you as if you were my own brother!"

Ralph knelt in his cell and cried to Heaven for strength to fight the devil within him. All night long he stood with bare feet on the cold stones; he fasted; he made himself a scourge of leather wherewith to scourge his body; he knelt for hours and meant to pray, but fair curls and a rosy face came between him and the crucifix on which his eyes were fixed. In the fine picture before him the Virgin Mary took Edith's slight form, the holy angels had Edith's lips, the martyrs had Edith's eyes. Suddenly his vocation seemed to him horrible, a barbarous, unnatural doom; and then again he cursed himself for the crime of having such wicked thoughts. Sometimes it seemed as if a fever consumed him; sometimes his teeth chattered with cold.

"None of our young people take it so seriously," said the good fathers.

When the moment of the ordination came, Edith knelt in the cathedral, and before she could prevent it, first one tear fell upon her prayer-book and then another and another, till a flood of tears streamed from her eyes, and the more beautiful the singing, the more she cried. When she found that mass was over, and that she was left alone, she got up and looked toward the altar, on which the lights were extinguished; then she heard a movement close by, and when she turned round, she saw Tassilo, leaning against a pillar with folded arms, looking at her.

"Oh, there is nothing the matter," said she in a whisper, reaching out her hands to him, blushing and smiling. "I am so glad for him! He is now a holy man, and will spend his life in doing good. Surely he must be glad and thankful, as he has never been before. I only wept for joy."

"I felt that these tears were holy tears of joy, Edith, believe me!" said Tassilo.

"He was always good, and he had no faults and weaknesses like other men. I never saw him do the least wrong, and wherever he was, it seemed that all about him were transformed. He never teased me like other tiresome boys, but always protected me. Oh! you cannot think how good he was!"

Ralph was in the town, Edith knew; he lived with an aged priest and sought eagerly to make himself useful and to prepare himself for the time when he could receive full ordination. He carefully avoided meeting Edith, and when he once did so, he bowed and passed on hastily. This grieved Edith terribly; she had not thought it would be needful for him to be so entirely a stranger to her, and had expected day after day to see him, and as every evening came without her having seen him, her little white pillow was wet with scalding tears. The world seemed to her all at once cold and empty, as if all life had been extinguished, and she began to beg her mother to let her go into a nunnery. But her mother told her she was a cruel daughter; did she think to please God, by going away and leaving her poor old mother quite alone?

She was all the less likely to give way to this desire when she saw that Tassilo was more and more attracted to Edith, and came very often to the house. A few days before Ralph's ordination, Edith's mother said to her: "Child, you can make me very happy, very happy indeed, and yourself too I hope.

"Indeed, mother," she answered, looking up with sad and weary eyes.

"If you were to become a rich and honored wife, our difficulties would be removed, and I might look forward to a happy old age with grandchildren about me."

Edith fell on her knees by her mother's side and covered her face with her hands. "Oh, mother! mother! can I make no other sacrifice for you? Oh, mother, spare me this, I entreat you!"

"But you will have an excellent husband, who loves you dearly."

"But I have no love for him! indeed I am not fit to be married! Oh, mother, how can I make any one happy?"

"That is his affair: he thinks that he will be happy enough, if he has the good fortune to gain you for his wife."

"But I am afraid." The poor girl wrung her hands, and said through her tears: "I have all my life longed for the happy, peaceful life of a convent, and lately more than ever, dear mother, more than ever!"

"Young girls cannot know what is good for them."

"Ah! if you knew how sinful I am."

"Then perhaps I should say you were not fit to be the bride of Heaven."

Edith sobbed out: "I have always been an obedient daughter; but this once you cannot expect me to be obedient."

"Do not be foolish, Edith; I only desire you to allow me to care for your happiness, and you make yourself as miserable about it as if it were your death-warrant." Edith wished to say something, but her mother motioned her away, and she had to go.

At last the day came when Ralph was to be ordained a priest. How beautiful was the scene when, as the aged bishop laid his hands on Ralph's head, the sunshine streamed in and seemed to illuminate them both! Now he was robed and his fingers anointed with the holy oil, so that everything he touched might become sacred, and he might be able to celebrate the mass. As Ralph turned to raise the cup before that vast crowd he saw Edith, and Edith only—her eyes fixed wonderingly on him. Their eyes met, and at that very moment the poor girl fainted and fell unconscious on the stony floor. A shadow passed over Ralph's brow, and his face as he turned again to the altar was stricken with sorrow and high resolve, like the face of a martyr. Tassilo assisted to raise the fainting maiden, but did not follow when they carried her out of the church, for

he saw Bertha's eyes fixed upon him. Tassilo had written to his father that he had no inclination for Bertha, but that he had met with a young girl who suited him much better, but unfortunately she was poor. For answer, he was told that love would come with marriage, and it was very much to be desired that he should marry the heiress, and that without loss of time. Tassilo sighed as he thought of Bertha's behavior, which, always strange, had lately become so capricious and wayward that no one could do anything with her; her grandmother even lost patience, and then received such rude replies that, in order to maintain her dignity at all, she had to keep silence.

"You are unwise, dear child," said she; "no man's heart is won so; keep your tongue in order; you will not be guided by anyone."

"I should have been guided easily enough, grandmother, if you hadn't always made me out to be so good and dear and charming, till I became what I am —till everyone is shocked at me and avoids me—till I am more miserable than anyone ever was before me."

"Silence," cried the grandmother.

"No, I will not be silent; I will speak. When I was rude, you, grandmother, said I was charming—though nobody else could bear me. You always encouraged me to speak even still more rudely. You taught me to laugh at people, you kissed me when I deserved the rod, and punished Ralph when I was in fault. And now there is nothing good left in me, nothing but my own fierce passions, which I cannot overcome, even if life and happiness depended on my doing so. You ought to have beaten me, grandmother."

"That can yet be done!" said the enraged old lady, as starting up she administered to her granddaughter such a box on the ear that sparks like fire danced before her eyes, and the white marks of four fingers were left upon her cheeks. Bertha stood a moment, as if stunned; then she ran out of the room, slammed the door, and shut herself up in her own room, and there she beat her head against the wall, and wounded herself with the

scissors in the arm as if she would have killed herself; then the thought struck her that this would only make it the more certain that Tassilo would marry Edith, and that should never be.

A few days after this, Tassilo ascended the stone steps to Bertha's house, with a beating heart and a troubled brow; he would sacrifice himself to his father's wishes, and ask for Bertha's hand. But as he was standing at the door, which was ajar, he heard her loud and angry voice: "You, you only have turned him away from me, for it was all arranged between his parents and mine; but then you must needs come between us with your soft voice! You cry before him, to excite his sympathy, you fall down fainting just to frighten him and make him jealous by people saying you are in love with Ralph. Impudent hussy! Who knows what sort of a love-potion you have given him, to make him forget the 'black witch' and fall in love with your doll's face! How many young men's heads are you going to turn?"

"But," sobbed out Edith, "you know very well I am going to be a nun!"

"I know that you are a liar, with your pious airs! I know that you play the hypocrite to make him the more eager; I know that you have ensnared him and that he will never, never, never come back to me!"

"But, indeed, I hardly ever speak to him!"

"Of course! it is just your being so cold that charms him so much. Oh, I can see clearly enough, for I love; you will never love, you cannot love, you don't know what suffering means, you spoiled child. See! I could grovel at his feet, and you would not move a hand for him. I would let myself be cut in pieces, but you would let him die without so much as turning your head. Take care, Edith. I am accustomed to get what I want; and, believe me, I would destroy you rather than yield to you."

Tassilo dropped the handle of the door, and fled down the steps. In the greatest excitement he ran to Edith's mother. "You must not send your daughter again to Bertha; if she goes there, she will be annoyed, and

made ill, and I will not allow her innocent heart to be troubled; I tell you I cannot bear it!"

The good woman smiled, but pretended to be occupied with disentangling her thread.

Bertha had heard footsteps going down from the door, and looked out quickly. She turned deadly pale. "He was there, and must have heard everything, and I am ruined!" she stammered hoarsely. The next moment she seized Edith by the shoulders, and shook her till she was almost insensible.

"Oh! let me alone!" she cried. "Will you not believe me? I tell you I should be glad to see him betrothed to you?"

"Promise to say 'no' when he comes to ask you?"

"If only I dare!"

"Do this, then I will believe in you!"

"I cannot—I dare not!"

"Hypocrite!"

"I wish I were one! I wish I loved him and could give him up for you!"

"Then you do not know what love is! You pale-faced thing with your cunning eyes! I could strangle you, I hate you so!" Edith trembled from head to foot, for Bertha's looks were as fierce as her words, and she seemed quite capable of carrying out her threat; but at this moment the grandmother came in and, observing with surprise the attitude of the two girls, she said: "I thought Tassilo was here. Surely I saw him come?"

"You are mistaken, grandmother, he was not here; he is going to propose to Edith, and Edith is just going home to her bridegroom! Good-by, Edith, much good luck and happiness to you!"

She threw her arms round Edith as if she would throttle her, kissed her as if she would bite her, and pushed her out of the door. Then she ran into her own room, threw herself on the bed, bit her pillow, tore her hair, laughed and cried and talked in the wildest manner. At last she suddenly jumped up and arranged her hair and her dress, went to her grandmother, and entertained her with talk full of wit and wickedness. Edith

was a long time going down the steps—she was obliged to lean against the house, she felt so weak. She took the longest road to get home. "Ralph, Ralph!" she whispered to herself. There had been a little shower of rain, the air was heavy and damp, and there were little pools between the stones of the pavement; she was obliged to hold up her dress and walk carefully in the middle of the street, for all the corners and gables were dripping. It was a pleasure to the passers-by to see the pretty maiden picking her way.

An old woman stood in her door-way. "God bless you, little lady! Good luck to you, my dear!"

"Ah, Barbara! I wish I were in your place!"

"God forbid, little lady! Why, what is the matter?"

"I wish I were out of the world! Can't you give me a charm to make me look ugly, so that no one may love me?"

"No, little lady, no one gets such charms from me! But take care, child, danger threatens you!"

"Me?" said Edith.

"Yes, from a priest; take nothing from a priest's hand, child!"

Edith smiled. "I am not afraid of that;" and she nodded to the old woman and passed on her way home. She walked, however, as slowly as possible, and it was only the rain coming on heavily that obliged her at last to enter the house. She found Tassilo talking eagerly to her mother, who immediately rose and left the room, but not without a glance of encouragement at Edith, and making signs with her finger to remind her of all she had said. Edith went to her embroidery-frame; but Tassilo came to her, and, putting his hand on the frame, said: "I want to speak to you." Edith was very pale, and leaned against the dark wooden window-frame. At that moment there was heard a peal of thunder, and the rain began to pour. It was so dark in the room that the shape of the stove could hardly be distinguished. The two young people stood in the glimmering light admitted by the little round casement window, and in the short silence between the

lightning and the thunder they could hear the beating of each other's hearts.

"I fear I shall seem to you fickle and changeable," began Tassilo, "if I speak to you of my long, deep love, for till now you have known me only as the appointed bridegroom of another. I have waited long enough, and what I unwillingly heard to-day has put the finishing touch and made an end of my hesitation. I tried to carry out the wishes of my parents, I tried to overcome my love; but such a sacrifice they cannot and do not desire of me; a mouth that can utter such words shall never be kissed by me"—here a flash illuminated the room, followed quickly by crashing thunder—"my heart is yours, has been yours alone from the first moment I saw you!"

"But Bertha is much handsomer than I am, and much more clever, and much"—"better" she wished to say, but could not. Edith spoke so low that Tassilo had to stoop down to hear what she said, because of the noise of the falling rain.

"You do her a great injustice, and me too! You have only seen her hot temper, and do not know how she suffers."

"I have seen other people suffer so patiently that I could have fallen on my knees as if to an angel." Edith raised her hand in deprecation.

"Oh, I will not force myself into the sanctuary of your heart that you guard so jealously; but only permit me to guard and guide you and teach you to be happy! I only desire to be allowed to love you!"

"But then," said Edith, raising her trembling hand, "then you will expect a love I cannot give! You deserve indeed a strong mind to lean upon, and mine is weak indeed."

"How strong is the mind you call weak, I have proved, and if I entreat you to be my bride, instead of the bride of Heaven, you may look on it as a pious sacrifice, and nothing more."

"If I could only make you happy!"

"That shall be my care."

"I am betraying my friend!"

"She betrayed herself! I am shocked at her love, which is more like hatred. No! I ask of you just so much as you can give, no more—with that I shall be rich!" She dropped her eyes and reached her hand to him gently, but he seized them both and pressed them to his heart and to his lips; neither of them observed a flash which brought the terrified mother into the room. Tassilo led Edith to her, and she, weeping for joy, embraced her trembling child, undisturbed by the crashing thunder that shook the house. And now the sun broke forth, the rain ceased, and it seemed as if a glory filled the room.

"Edith a bride!" This news ran through the town, taking people by surprise, for it had been said for some time that Tassilo was to be betrothed to Bertha, and it reached the young priest as he was returning from a funeral service. He shut himself up in his study, and walked up and down all night long. He kept saying it himself that it was right and natural, and that it was better for Edith not to have to hide her beauty behind the walls of a convent. Yet he could not sleep, he fancied he was dead; but, no, the conflict began again. He was hungry and joined the others at meal-time, but he could not eat a mouthful; at last he said to one of the elder priests: "Pray for me; I am afraid I shall lose my senses."

"What! they are not so easily lost," said he cheerfully, but he observed the young man closely. He sent him out into the country as often as possible to perform baptisms or funerals, but not marriages, and contrived that he should have long walks and rides in beautiful scenery. He rode alone and silent, his eyes wandering over woods and fields, occasionally delighted by flowers which he stopped to admire. But his despair was changed to melancholy, and fatigue gradually brought back sleep, and the wild tumult of his thoughts was stilled into dull and sad uniformity. So far this was a point gained. After a time he was able to go and see his grandmother, and then he was much shocked

to see Bertha. Her cheeks were pale and hollow, her eyes were sunken and gleamed as if she were going out of her mind.

"What has happened to you, Bertha?"

"I'm a witch," said she laughing hoarsely; "I am old and ugly and wicked, so wicked that even grandmother is afraid of me."

"And are you not ashamed to say so?"

"Some one else ought to be ashamed; I am not!"

"Bertha, the devil is trying to clutch hold of you; get you into a nunnery, and hide your eyes and pray that you may become pure again; you will come at last to evil thoughts!"

"I have evil thoughts already," she murmured. "I might have strangled her; I never can think of her little white throat without my fingers longing to throttle it." Ralph shuddered. "And they have not even the charity to keep out of my sight. There, see there, they go together, Ralph! Look, Ralph, look! and he makes such loving eyes, and is so polite; she is a hussy, a traitress, a thief!"

Ralph laid his thin white finger on his sister's lips, and looked at her with such a blaze of indignation that she was frightened.

"Bertha," said he, "I am indeed grieved for you. The devil has you already; soon you will have lost all power of escape!"

"Revenge! Ralph, I will have revenge or die!"

"Go into your room and pray on your bended knees day and night till you destroy this serpent at your heart. You are on the brink of some evil deed, Bertha; stop before it is too late!" She would not listen; her eyes wandered up and down the street. Ralph groaned, and left her; he fled out into the country to gain quiet, and bring some sort of clearness to his mind.

The time for Edith's marriage seemed to draw near so quickly as to leave little opportunity for preparation; she was a quiet bride, always soft and gentle; she thanked Tassilo over and over again for his great love, and if he asked her tenderly: "Have you forgotten the

nunnery, darling?" she shook her head and said anxiously: "I will forget it, but let me have a little time!"

To Tassilo the time appeared terribly long, and as if the wedding day would never come, and as if his happiness was too great to bear. He felt afraid that something would happen to destroy it all. But now there were only three days. Edith sent her mother to Ralph.

"Tell him, I wish him to marry me, and tell him it was he who taught me how to sacrifice myself, and now his hand shall lead me to take this great step. And tell him how hard it was for me, and that I have done it for love of you, mother, and as a duty, and that his own words brought me to listen to you, and that if he gave me his blessing, I should surely remain good and happy. I desire, too, to receive the Communion from him and to remain his faithful little sister as I have always been! I have been warned never to take anything from the hand of a priest, but his hand can bring me nothing but blessing." Tassilo agreed to this, for every wish of Edith was sacred for him, and all feelings of jealousy were dismissed as unworthy.

When Edith's mother presented her request, Ralph was standing with his back to the window, so that she could not see his face. At first he answered shortly and roughly:

"No, I cannot, I have no time!"

"Not even when Edith begs you?"

"Not even then. Do you not hear, I have no time?"

"Then I will speak to Father ——, and ask him to perform the ceremony."

"Pray do not. I beg of you to do nothing of the kind!" The mother, who had firmly determined not to deliver Edith's message, now began to tell first a little of it, then more, and ended by giving the whole. But Ralph was still silent.

"My child has sacrificed herself for me—it has cost her much pain, and now will you not help your little sister to carry out her purpose?"

After a pause Ralph said: "Yes, I am ready to do

so," then he opened the door and motioned his visitor to leave him.

It was evening and very dark, and as she returned home, a dark muffled-up figure walked before her, carrying a dark lantern, which was opened every hundred yards or so, but nothing was to be seen but the tall figure and the light fitfully and suddenly shining here and there. At last, at Barbara's house the figure stopped and knocked gently, after shutting up the lantern close. When the old woman opened the door, the figure entered, and without lifting its veil said in a deep voice: "You can tell one's fortune, here is my hand," and held out a thin bare hand from beneath the cloak.

"Oho," said the old woman, "what put such a thing in your head? Have you been betrayed? You have revengeful thoughts."

"Is that true?" said the veiled figure. "But at any rate for my revenge I want your help, witch; be prudent for once; I know you and your arts, and if I choose, I can bring you to-morrow before the secret tribunal of the Vehm, and the next day to the stake; but help me, and I will be silent."

These two talked for some time, and at last the veiled figure left the house again, with some small object carefully concealed under the cloak. The evening before Edith's marriage, the same figure slipped into the cathedral before the doors were closed for the night. When it became quite dark, it approached the altar and, opening the lantern, took out of it an iron hook and with it opened the rail; it made a noise, and the figure seemed alarmed and crouched down for some minutes. Then it rose up again, and drawing the chalice nearer, began to arrange the wafers in it in a certain order, placing one by itself on the top of all; then the figure stepped back and seemed to consider whether all was right, then looked eagerly round and shut the lantern; it looked as if some old picture had stepped out of its frame. It struck itself on the head, opened the lantern again, pushed back the chalice, carefully shut the rails and crept away stealthily out of the church.

This night Ralph had again recourse to his scourge, but he seemed not to feel its cutting lash, for his heart was, as it were, torn by serpents. His sufferings during this night were terrible; it was as if an iron hand seized his beating heart and compressed it till it stood still: he swooned. In passionate prayer the words poured from his lips:

"My God! My God! forsake me not; let this cup pass from me; in Thy great mercy make some way for me to escape having myself to give this woman to another man. I cannot say the words; they will wither up my lips; crush Thy unworthy servant, let the lightning strike me, but bid me not to torture myself with my own hand! Save me, Heavenly Father, save me! My sin is great, but Thy mercy is greater; save me, my God, my God!"

When he rose from his knees, he looked an old man, his face was so drawn and furrowed. He found himself by and by in the cathedral, but never knew how he got there. He saw that he stood in the very spot where at his ordination he had cried aloud: "No! No! I am not worthy!"

The sexton came and asked him whether he was going to celebrate the mass, and stared astonished at his appearance. He was as if in a dream; he fancied some one else was reading the mass, and as if he were a little boy led by the hand of his young beautiful mother whom he so loved and admired, and as if she were once again teaching him to make the sign of the cross. He felt her delicate warm fingers holding his tiny hand. When he turned and raised the chalice, his eyes sought his mother and saw Edith, who knelt before him to receive the Communion alone, and looked like an angel, dressed as she was in her bridal attire.

"Ah! that I could have laid thee in thy coffin, so pure, so innocent, so calm!" thought he at the moment when he placed the wafer on her trembling lips. She gave him a look, like a greeting from heaven. It remained with him to his dying day. Then she rose and knelt in a distant corner of the church, awaiting the

bridegroom. She saw that the church was full of the wedding guests, she thought she saw Bertha quite near to her, but then everything seemed to swim before her eyes, everything seemed thick and confused as if in a mist, then came a buzzing and booming in her ears, as of a distant storm. Her mother rubbed her ice-cold hands, and she had to lean upon Tassilo's arm to reach the altar. Her limbs and tongue were heavy as lead; but yet she found strength to smile at Tassilo and whisper: "I have forgotten the nunnery! I am gladly thine!" but the last word was hardly audible.

Now they stood before the altar. Ralph made an address that touched everyone deeply except the bride and bridegroom, who did not hear it, and Ralph himself, who did not in the least know what he said. For he saw Edith's countenance falter, and saw how anxiously Tassilo looked at her, drawing her arm more firmly through his. With a loud voice he said the words, "Edith, I take thee to be my wedded wife." But when Ralph turned to the bride as white as ashes and said: "Tassilo, I take thee," she called out loudly, "Ralph!" stretched out her arms toward him with agony in her eyes, and fell dead at his feet. The mother shrieked, the people crowded round the altar, Ralph knelt down and took Edith's head in his arms, while Tassilo with bitter tears chafed her hands and called her tenderly by her name. But Ralph with a firm hand closed her eyes as calmly as if he had never known her, and a smile played on his lips. Some pretended they saw Bertha leaning over her brother and looking at the dead girl; others asserted that she had certainly not been in the church at all. Edith's unhappy mother only came to herself some days afterward, and could hardly be brought to believe that she still lived. Her sorrow was not to be comforted. Tassilo whenever he looked upon the lovely body broke out into groans as if his heart would burst: in a few days he was in a raging fever.

Edith lay in her bridal dress with the myrtle wreath twisted in her silken locks, a peaceful smile upon her

lips and a little cross on her breast between her folded hands. Ralph did not leave her, night or day, reading the prayer whenever anyone entered, and whispering tenderly to the dead maiden when alone. The smile that overspread his face was as unearthly as that on the face of the dead.

"I have won thee by prayer, and thou art my own for time and for eternity. The Lord was gracious unto me and saved me. Now has my heart not one more tie to earth; it is with thee in heaven!" So he talked on during these sacred and terrible hours of watching.

Public feeling, however, was not satisfied. It refused to believe in a miracle, and endeavored to make out what had really happened. The secret tribunal of the Vehm had seized Barbara, broken her wand, and put her to the torture in their subterranean vaults. She could not prove that she had never prepared charms, love-potions and other things that might be dangerous. She could not prove that she had not lately prepared and given out such; but she did not know to whom she had given them. She was brought to the stake, but allowed to live and tortured, in the hope that some information could be gained from her.

Some people whispered things of Bertha's grandmother, for it was known how much she had desired that Tassilo should marry her granddaughter; but she was rich and had a certain position, and no one cared to interfere with her. Bertha had latterly become so gay, and when this dreadful event occurred showed so much apparent grief, that suspicion was averted from her. Edith's mother could not be brought to give a sensible answer to any question whatever; she was seemingly quite out of her mind. Ralph rendered the last services to his loved one; he did not leave her side till the grave was covered in. Now he threw himself, dressed as he was, upon his bed, so exhausted that he could not move; a sort of stupor overcame him, mind and body. He looked then as if he were dead; he lay very still, with sunken eyes and hollow cheeks, like an old man.

He slept so heavily that he did not wake when, in the middle of the night, his door was gently opened and a veiled figure entered, carefully shutting the door behind it. It placed a little lantern on the floor, the light from which streamed over the bed. When the figure approaching cast off the veil, and caught sight of Ralph, it cried: "You also dead!" and kneeling by his side, covered his hand with kisses. Then he opened his eyes and stared for some moments at the kneeling figure without recognizing her. At last he raised himself and cried: "Bertha! you here at night? What a restless being!"

"I am not come to my brother," said she in her deep voice, "but to the priest, for I must confess." Ralph sat down on the edge of the bed, his weary face full of anxious expectation. Bertha folded her hands and bowed her head on her bosom. All was so still that her quick breathing could be heard. Ralph looked up at the crucifix, as if to seek strength, and laid his hand on his sister's curly hair. He thought of the hair that in the morning he had stroked so tenderly, and was now under the cold earth—all but one lock that lay in his own bosom, and was to go to the grave with him. Bertha raised her head.

"It must be," said she. "If you knew what I had done, you would not touch me, you would turn me out like a venomous beast."

"I am a priest," said Ralph.

"Ralph, there are things that can be borne, and things that cannot be borne." Ralph looked at the crucifix and at the scourge and at the stones still marked with drops of blood.

"And I could not bear that Tassilo should belong to another, and not to me. Ah, Ralph, you don't know what love is, or you would comprehend that it is an overmastering power which may even destroy heart, soul and reason." As Bertha said this, a sad smile passed over Ralph's face unseen by her. Ralph thought of his prayer on that terrible night, and for the first

time he was overcome with repentance, and the bitter thought that God had only heard him in order to punish him.

"You do not know what it is when the heart is breaking," she continued, raising her head and looking earnestly at him for a moment. "You are so pure and noble, Ralph—so far removed from human passions—that you cannot guess the agonies that can be endured!"

"I can guess," said Ralph.

"One feels as if consumed in a burning fire; one feels madness coming on; one is ready to shriek for fear."

"Fear should make one pray," said Ralph.

"No! I could not pray, for I had the most horrible thoughts. Ah, I thought I hated Edith. I thought she had caught him with her arts; I thought she would triumph over me when she knew how dreadfully miserable I was; I thought she had not half so much love for him as I had, and so I went one night to Barbara and asked her advice. She gave me advice and something else, too. Alas! that it neither burned my hands as I carried it home, nor destroyed me as I took it into the church. Alas! that no voice came to cry to Heaven, while I laid the wafer in its place—Ralph, the wafer that you gave to Edith!" Ralph started up and was going to push her away; but he sat down again and hid his face in his hands.

"And I was in the church to see her die, for I was afraid you had not taken up the right wafer."

"My God! my God!" groaned Ralph.

"And I felt no sorrow. I stood behind you as she lay dead in your arms, and I felt no sorrow. I saw Tassilo's despair, and I felt no sorrow. I only laughed. But in the night it seemed to me that she came into my room and called me and threatened me." Bertha shuddered and looked round, crouching as she had done in the cathedral. "But, Ralph, the agony that I have endured since that you can never—never know. I am afraid in the light, I am afraid in the dark, I am terrified at a noise and yet more at the stillness of night, I am afraid of my shadow, of the rustle of my own gown,

of the sound of my own breath. I dread the executioner, therefore I come to you, instead of to a magistrate."

"Another is taken and punished, instead of you!"

"Therefore I come here! Save the innocent! Say a poor sinner has confessed the deed to you, and you have——"

"I have——"

"Ah!" cried Bertha, "you can never—never forgive me! I am lost for eternity!"

"Who on the earth has the power to forgive such a deed? Would you believe me if I said God forgave you? You are not fit to live." Bertha fell at his feet, and bowed her head on her hands to the ground.

"I know that—I know it too well," said she. "I ought to die! But, Ralph, I dare not! The pains of death are horrible to bear, but what tortures will they not add for me! and to be consigned to hell without opportunities for expiation—that is more dreadful still."

"And you desire still to mix in human society? Who do you think will bear to come near you?"

"Oh! no one, no one! I have sworn that this shall be the last word my lips shall speak, this the last time a man shall look upon my face. There is a nunnery where there are cells in the rock for sinners like me. Give me a letter, without telling my name; then I shall be henceforth dead to the world, and dead to you; I will go straight away this night, so that I get there before daylight—so that the sun may never shine upon me again, for before it rises I shall be buried beneath the earth till my end comes."

Ralph stood up and went to his desk. Bertha laid her head on her brother's bed. He looked at her as he stood with the pen in his hand, then he lighted the little lamp by the light of which he had worked so hard and suffered so much. He shaded his eyes with hands almost transparent, and his face looked as old and worn as if he had lived a hundred years. Slowly, and with many vain attempts, he at last wrote a short letter; as he folded it up, lost in deep thought, Bertha stood up and said:

"If in years to come you ever think of the miserable sinner to whom you would not give absolution, although she was your sister, then, Ralph—then absolve me, and may God preserve you from frenzied thoughts!"

She drew her veil closely round her, took the letter from the edge of the desk where he had laid it, turned to the door, looked round once at her brother, and vanished in the darkness. Ralph did not move. When she went, he was standing with his hands over his eyes, and when morning dawned, he was still standing in the same position. The lamp flared up and went out, but Ralph did not move. There rose the sun, and, as on the morning of Edith's wedding, filled the little room with rosy light. Ralph looked through the window. There was the sun in all its glory and majesty that was never again to shine on that poor sinner—she was now only one among many, and that one his sister! He went to the old priest and knocked at his door. There he sat by his steaming breakfast, the sun shining in upon his youthfully fresh and rosy face. "But, my dear young friend, what have you done to your hair?"

"To my hair!"

"You seem to have strewed it with flour, it is quite white!"

"I have this night had the most extraordinary confession made to me," said he, trembling. "The criminal who caused the death of the bride has confessed to me, and is immured from sight forever. I have been implored to prevent further investigations in order that the innocent may not be sacrificed." The old man passed his brown hand across his brow, and fixed his sharp, clear eyes on the young man.

"You would be glad to leave this neighborhood for a time?" said he at last.

"I should indeed," said Ralph, and a slight color flushed his white face for a moment.

"Would you like to go as a missionary to the heathen in the East?" Ralph approached and kissed the old man's hand.

"Then here is your appointment, and you can start in the morning, and God's blessing go with you!"

Ralph knelt down. "My only friend in my need," stammered he, and again kissed the aged hand.

"See," said the old priest, "a man should never despair, for if he can bear no more, then help is near. Go, my son, and learn to forget—to forget yourself, and what has been confessed to you; and preserve the strength that you have won in hard but noble conflict. And if we ever meet again on earth, may you be able to look me joyfully in the face as more than conqueror."

A burning glow hung over the desert, the air trembled as if over a great fire, and all around lay the dying and the dead. The plague raged here, and cut down men like the grass in a meadow. Weeping and wailing filled the air and attracted the vultures, of which great flocks hovered over this place of desolation. Through the despairing crowd walked a priest, the cup in his hand, words of comfort on his lips, peace on his countenance. In his arms a young girl even could draw her last breath; he held the cross to her lips for her to kiss, then he pointed with it toward heaven, and as she gazed, her head fell back, and breathing ceased. At that sight a blaspheming man stifled the words on his lips, beckoned to him, kissed the hem of his garment, and was dead. He took an infant from its mother's stiffened arms, turned it round tenderly, moistened its blackened lips, stroked its pale cheeks, and at last when dead laid it back again in its mother's arms. They called him the Holy Man of the Desert—the Saviour, the Angel sent by Allah to frighten away the pestilence. The angel was Ralph!

After many long years, he returned to his native place, sunburnt and thin, with a heavenly peace in his eyes, and on his lips. Everyone looked at the strange pilgrim, with the white hair and brown beard. He inquired after different people but found no one. He knelt long at a grave overgrown with flowers and grass,

he pulled aside the roses and ivy from the marble cross, and kissed the name "Edith."

Then he thought of another lost one, and turned to the nunnery to ask after his sister. She had died some time before, and according to her wish, had been buried veiled as she was in life. But she left a little note in her cell. On this was written: "Now you may forgive me, Ralph! Pray for me, for your prayer is holy; I believe in its power."

"So also do I," said Ralph, with groans and sighs.

This thrilling story of Indian warfare among the Rocky Mountains has been written for ROMANCE by Louis De Lestry.

THE CAMP ON SINGING RIVER.

It was late in the sixties.

After a perilous, tedious and fruitless journey to the upper Kootenay, we had decided to return eastward over the trail already known to us rather than try to reach the Pacific over an entirely unknown route, beset with extraordinary danger and hitherto almost untravelled.

Our party was fairly well organized, considering the fact that we were merely on a prospecting trip, led out by many stories of fabulous strikes and rich diggings.

We were as sorely disappointed a lot as ever started on a back trail. Not even a decent color did we find on the weary way. Seated about the camp-fire that evening, Bill Tupper, our guide, finally broke the silence, which had lasted for over half-an-hour, as every man felt too keenly the disappointment of returning empty-handed.

"See here, boys," said Bill, "here ye sit mopin' and mopin', night after night, over matters as can't be helped. It's hundreds of miles back yonder to the diggin's in Alder gulch, which is es far es ye kin git this season, barrin' no mishap. Thar ain't no use stayin' heer and if we don't be movin' soon, snow will ketch us in the hills afore we kin git across."

The force of the argument struck home. It aroused us all from the usual after-supper lethargy, which we were accustomed to drop into. To be caught on the main range of the Rockies in midwinter was a prospect so horrible and uninviting, that we determined to lose no time in getting started for home. We concluded to devote one day to hunting and supplying the party with

fresh meat, to prepare a lot for the trip, and then be off. Game was plentiful in that uncanny region and we found no trouble in getting all that we wanted. On the following day we started early, and after a wearisome march reached the summit of the continental divide safely.

Early fall had set in when we began the ascent. We had taken the lower route, the one used by Lewis and Clarke in their expedition to the Columbia, and now known as Mullan Pass. This would bring us to the neighborhood of Last Chance, which was in its primeval infancy when we left the far-off settlements.

Our stock of breadstuffs was running low, and it was necessary to reach some camp as early as possible.

The scenes we passed through for beauty and sublimity beggared all description. Occasionally a scared bird would rise hastily into space, as our column came winding down the trail, which was so narrow as to compel us to ride Indian fashion, one behind the other, with the pack-animals in groups between us, thus making conversation during the progress of the journey impossible.

It is doubtful if any of the others paid heed to the attractions of the country. Silently the cavalcade wended its way down the steep trail. The whole looked so uninviting and dangerous that involuntarily each man looked to his firearms, and all drew as close together as possible while we rode on, and many a pipe was stowed away in the pocket of its owner. It stood us in hand to be careful, as the Indian did not look with great favor upon the inroads the white men were making upon his hitherto undisputed domain. Many a venturesome prospector had left the settlements, before us and had never returned, leaving his bones to bleach in the sun and rain, until found later, if ever, by others following in his footsteps. Danger lurked even in the closest proximity of the settlements, and the unwary could never tell when the blow might fall. Eternal vigilance was the price of life.

The sun was setting. It became evident that we could

not reach Last Chance before dark, although we could see the smoke of the camp, as we were on much higher ground. We were now leisurely following the course of a small stream, unknown to us. Arriving at a small table-land, we decided to pitch camp there for the night, for we were tired and hungry. Camp was soon ready and preparations for a hearty supper were quickly under way. No accident had befallen us thus far, and while consuming the meal with ravenous appetite, the boys soon found their old-time humor and many a good story was dished up for dessert. After supper the animals were picketed in a clump of bushes near by. The evening was perfect.

The boys were idling about the tents. A few were playing cards; others were stretched out in the luxuriant grass, busy with sky-gazing, perhaps thinking of home and friends a good many miles away.

Bill Tupper had wandered away towards the stream, and we could see him in the twilight, seated on a huge boulder, near the water's edge, listening intently to something. Then he walked up the stream, and returning walked down the stream. At times he halted, and once he stooped and placed his ear to the ground. Suddenly, the sound of horses' hoofs was plainly audible, and while Bill was running back to camp, revolver in hand, a stranger came dashing up, looking more dead than alive. Behind him and clinging to him was a woman. The horse looked jaded, and both riders were nearly worn out. We asked them to sit down and rest, but the man answered at once: "Captain, there is no time to lose. Rather get your shooting-irons ready, and look to your animals. You see we were camped down the creek a distance of about five miles. We could see the smoke of your camp-fires all the evening. We were right in thinking this a white man's camp, as the Indians hardly ever use green wood. There were only three of us, my partner, his wife and myself. About two hours ago we stopped to get supper and get the camp ready for the night. While we were eating, there came the crash of rifles. My partner fell over dead.

A bullet struck my arm, but the woman escaped. We didn't stop long, but I put her on a horse, jumped up myself and made a dash for your camp. The pests were on the other side of the stream, which gave us some advantage. But look out, for it won't be long before they will be upon us. They don't know yet that you are here and will try to capture us. Let's give them a warm reception when they come. If you have an extra gun, let me have it, for I want to get even with them for the killing of my partner."

Here was news indeed. Having come so far unmolested, we did not anticipate any trouble from Indians so close to the settlement.

However, we got ready for them. The animals were brought in closer. Each man looked to his guns and ammunition, and a double line was formed for action.

It was indeed not long before the red devils appeared on the opposite side of the stream. They were not a little surprised to see a considerable body of armed men ready to fight, and naturally hesitated to make an attack.

Darkness was now setting in fast and care had to be exercised to prevent them from crossing the stream and making a night attack. But we counted on the early rising of the moon, now in its full, and decided to fight it out by moonlight, if any fighting was to be done that night. A few wild shots were exchanged without doing any damage on either side. We had extinguished our camp-fires, thus taking away any advantage the Indians might gain by their light. We noticed the red-skins moving a little further up stream, as if trying to find a more suitable place from which to attack us or to cross the stream. Bill Tucker laughed and said: "Watch out for some fun now, boys."

We failed to see any fun before us, being unable to determine the number of our opponents. They might be too many for us, and possible extermination is decidedly anything but funny. But suddenly the Indians gave one unearthly yell, and by the light of the rising

moon we could see them dash away over the rolling prairie, to the east.

Bill laughed again.

"I reckon as what these pesky devils won't trouble us any more jess now," was all that he said.

Curiosity prompted everybody to find out the cause of their hasty flight, and of Bill's positiveness. He bade us come with him and listen quietly and carefully. When near the stream, a peculiar sound could be heard from several directions, resembling the ringing of a thousand bells at once. At times the tones would become weaker and gradually die away with a peculiar noise, resembling a deep-drawn moan. Then they would increase again in strength, becoming more resonant and distinct.

Mystified, we looked about us for an explanation of this strange phenomenon, but failed to find one. Bill finally explained that the sounds were produced by the waters of the stream, running over the peculiar rocks in its bed. There was an old Indian legend of a "singing river," that predicted death for all who camped on its banks. There had been quite a massacre among warring tribes in that vicinity, so goes tradition, which made the "singing river" dreaded by all the red tribes thereafter. But it had saved our lives, and we lost no time in reaching the settlement after the sun had risen over the hilltops.

NOTE.—This strange freak of nature can be distinctly heard by any one who will walk to the upper "Ten Mile Creek," west of Helena, Montana, in the heart of the foothills. Indians to this day still call it by that name.

L. DE L.

The incidents of this tale might have happened in the old days of chivalry. Ellen E. Kenyon has translated it from "Illustrirte Chronik der Zeit" for ROMANCE. It is by Hans von Spielberg.

A TALE OF THE GREAT SAHARA.

"I AM tired of all this talk about humanitarianism," said Captain Gressoux, somewhat impatiently. "Severity, relentless severity, is the only means by which these people can be kept in order."

"And I insist, on the contrary, my dear Gressoux," replied the Viscount de Marsac, with his benevolent smile, "that we must teach Christian kindness to these brown, uncultured children of nature by practicing it ourselves."

The commander shrugged his shoulders.

"You speak as you understand, viscount," said he. "When you are bettter acquainted with this savage horde, you will agree with me. Personal experience will put some of your gentle theories to flight. But let us not talk of them any more. François, fill up the glasses. Wide-awake, lad! To the ladies, gentlemen!"

It was one evening in August, 1865. A pleasant company was gathered at Fort El Malah, situated in Algiers, on the edge of the Great Desert. Captain Gressoux was commander of the Second Regiment of Zouaves, who were at that time in charge of the fort. Beside him sat the kindly diplomatist, Viscount de Marsac, and on the other hand a young officer in a foreign uniform.

Baron Griesheim, whose name and features alike betokened his nationality; several officers of the garrison; Lord Dudley, a young Englishman of rank, and, last and least, myself, made up the assembly.

We had occupied the station for three days only. The viscount had brought with him his charming wife, and her no less lovely and amiable sister, Fräu-

lein von Reichshoff. Of course, the ladies added much to the social gayety of the fort. It was not an uncommon thing for the wife of a French dignitary to accompany her husband on a mission to Africa. Indeed, the town of Algiers had become quite a fashionable center.

Lord Dudley's presence among us was owing to his ambition as a hunter, which could only be satisfied by the dangerous pursuit of the king of beasts. My own object in visiting Africa was the study of geology in that interesting land, which was then almost new to the science.

We had quickly made ourselves at home and very comfortable in the fort. The officers of the garrison by a little crowding together had managed to find room for Dudley, Griesheim and myself. The viscount's family were provided with comfortable quarters, although tents were called into requisition in order to make the accommodations more ample for the ladies.

We lived together quite happily, and the evenings, especially, had many pleasant hours of social enjoyment to offer.

Lord Dudley and Baron Griesheim, however, had unconsciously developed that unfortunate mutual relation in which the happiness of the one must necessarily entail the misery of the other. They were rival lovers. Both had known Fräulein von Reichshoff before the present expedition, and both were deeply in love with the young lady.

She was a Juno in figure, tall, slender, dignified and graceful. Calm and regular features, chief among which were a pair of liquid, changeful eyes, made her face very beautiful. In a moment of enthusiasm, Lord Dudley once likened those lustrous eyes to the mountain lakes of Scotland.

In the discussion with which our story opens, I had taken no part, purposely refraining from expressing an opinion on the point in question; but the captain suddenly turned upon me with a demand for my views as to the proper mode of governing the Arabs. I answered evasively at first, finally suggesting a middle

course between undue harshness and a dangerous leniency. Griesheim and Dudley were of my opinion. This seemed to irritate the captain. Striking his clenched fist upon the table, he exclaimed:

"Listen, while I illustrate to you what is to be expected from these hounds in return for kindness. I spoke of personal experience. Here is a chapter from my own."

We moved closer together and leaned upon the table in various attitudes of attention, while Gressoux began:

"Twenty-three years ago, as lieutenant, I assisted in the command of a small fort but a short distance from this very spot. I was young and fiery. My heart was full of hopes and dreams, and I thought myself the especial pet of fortune. I enjoyed a certain favor with my superior officers, and expected in a short time to be entrusted with a certain diplomatic mission of considerable importance.

"We were having some trouble with a neighboring tribe, and it was the somewhat difficult task of at once subduing and conciliating their chief, Si Hamed ben Hamsa, that was confided to me. This commission was much to my taste in more ways than one, and I succeeded perfectly in arranging matters to the satisfaction of all.

"It was the last day of my stay with Si Hamed ben Hamsa, in Duar, when he invited me to accompany him on a lion-hunt—an invitation which I was not slow to accept. I will be brief, for the incidents of the hunt, with a single exception, do not concern my narrative. Before the end of it, I had the good fortune to drag Si Hamed from the very claws of the desert-king. Of course, I risked my life in saving his, and I brought away this memento of the day."

The captain bared his arm to the shoulder, and exhibited two deep scars on the upper part of it.

"Si Hamed swore eternal gratitude for the service I had rendered him, and I, fool, believed he was sincere.

"A year went by—the happiest year of my life. In the neighborhood of the fort, a number of colonists had

made their homes, attracted by the fruitfulness of the land. Among them was an Englishman named Legrand, with his wife and daughter. The daughter and I were engaged to be married, and the wedding-day was but a few weeks distant. I intended to leave the army, purchase a small farm adjoining Legrand's, and settle down with Marian to the joys of a quiet, domestic life.

"The country had long been free from disturbances, and no one thought of war, when a sudden uprising of the natives filled us all with alarm. Their first aggressions were in the neighborhood of our fort. One night in June, a horde of the barbarians plundered three farms, among them, Legrand's. The men were murdered, and the women and children were carried off, captives. As we rode by, the next morning, a scene of desolation arrested our progress. Legrand lay dead upon his doorstep, and my bride had disappeared.

"All the indications pointed to Si Hamed as the perpetrator of this unexpected outrage. Indeed, my last hope rested upon that chance. While military preparations were being made for the pursuit and punishment of the assassins, I sought and obtained a short leave of absence. I hastened to appear in person before Si Hamed. Surely, it would be an easy thing for the chief whose life I had saved to restore to me my Marian.

"I reached Duar and succeeded in gaining admission to Si Hamed's tent. I reminded him who I was, and begged for information regarding Marian's fate. The sheik laughed scornfully, and motioning over his shoulder to an inner compartment of the tent, said: 'Thou mean'st the blonde maiden? Reassure thyself, my friend. She is with me, and what better home can there be for her than the household of a sheik to whom it is permitted to wear the green turban?'

"I told him she was my betrothed. He laughed again. I offered him my all for her ransom,—vainly. Finally I reminded him of his oath, made when the blood at the cost of which I had saved his life was still coursing from the fresh wounds and warm and wet

upon my sleeve. That wrought a change. His voice was like the purring of a cat as he acknowledged the debt he owed me.

"'True, my only friend among all the French,' said he. 'Si Hamed owes thee much, and no one shall say that he has broken his word with thee. Await me at midnight beside the spring with the three palms. I will deliver thy Marian to thee myself.'

"I wished to thank him, but he silenced me. I must leave Duar in all possible haste, he said, or he could not answer for my safety. Once more I looked him keenly in the eye. Once more he laid his hand upon his heart in sign of devoted friendship. I left the tent."

The captain paused in his recital, and looked straight before him as if lost in the despair of the past. After a moment or two, he continued:

"I suppose some of you know the spring with the three palms. It is in a lonely spot, a little apart from the road between Flemsen and Oran. With a heart full of hope and fear I sought the spot after nightfall. I was alone, for, despite my misgivings, I trusted the sheik's promise. I tied my good horse to a tree, and sat down to wait. The hours seemed each an eternity, but at last the rising moon told me that the appointed time was near at hand. Her pure rays lighted up the lonely waste and enabled me to consult my watch. It was midnight.

"Almost at the same instant, my horse neighed slightly; and, as I once more looked in the direction of Duar, the horizon was broken by a dark point, which grew larger and larger as it neared me. Soon the swiftly-approaching object became distinctly outlined against the sand and sky. I could distinguish horse from rider; and, if my eyes did not deceive me, there were two in the saddle.

"My heart was well nigh bursting with joy when——"

Again the captain paused, and this time the agony of recollection blanched his face and drew large drops of perspiration out upon his forehead. His eyes grew wild with horror, as though the tragedy were being

enacted before him in the very present, so cruelly vivid was memory's picture of that terrible scene. Not one of us stirred. We hardly breathed, while waiting for him to resume his narrative, so intense was our sympathy for the horrible grief thus plainly re-awakened in his mind. At length he recovered himself with a gasp, and looked around upon our horrified faces with a startled expression, as though he had unexpectedly dropped down among us from another sphere. Then, with haggard countenance and mechanical tone, he went on.

"In full career, the Arab curved toward me as I hastened joyfully to meet him. Hardly fifty paces lay between us, when suddenly something flashed in the moonlight. Then a heart-rending shriek pierced the ear. It was echoed by a fiendish laugh. A dark form slid to the earth, and the Arab's steed wheeled off again like lightning.

"'There hast thou thy bride!' cried the murderer, and before I could use my pistol upon him, he was out of range. For a moment I stood, paralyzed. Then I held Marian in my arms. She was bleeding, dead. The assassin's dagger was in her heart!"

A shudder ran through the great, square frame of the old soldier, and, in the stillness which followed, the tears coursed freely down his weather-beaten cheeks, apparently without his knowledge, as he made no effort to conceal or dry them. A spell was upon us all, and a dead silence reigned when he had ceased speaking. At last, Lord Dudley sprang to his feet.

"And is the wretch alive to-day?" he cried. "If so, I will find and kill him!"

A sad smile stole over the captain's drawn features.

"You are too late!" he replied. "Four weeks after his crime Si Hamed fell dead by my hand. His son is sheik to-day."

The captain arose and was about to depart, when the officer on watch entered and addressed him with this announcement:

"An Arab chief with two followers has just arrived.

He asks shelter for the night and an interview with the commander for the morning. I have given the party quarters, and set a sentinel on guard over them. The sheik's name is Si Hamed ben Hamsa."

Gressoux pressed his lips together, and controlled himself with a painful effort. Then he replied:

"Treat him well. I will receive him early in the morning. Good night, gentlemen!"

As Baron Griesheim and I crossed the yard next morning, we saw the sheik standing beside the well, watering his horse. Master and steed were alike superb. The horse was full-blooded, supple of joint, slender, with muscles of steel and a spirit of fire beneath his shining coat; the man was above medium height, haughty, athletic, swarthy, with sharply-cut features, flowing hair and dark, glowing eyes.

A nudge from Griesheim put an end to my ardent admiration by calling my attention to the fact that the Arab himself was lost in contemplation. His arm lay absently upon the neck of his horse, and his intense brown eyes were fixed upon Fräulein Reichshoff, who, with her sister, had just left their quarters for their usual morning walk.

Just then the captain's deep voice broke the stillness as he came up behind us. The sheik turned suddenly, and a cat-like expression crept into his eyes as he saw that he had been observed. He crossed his arms upon his breast, and bowed low in oriental greeting.

The captain approached him with measured steps. The old soldier's face showed in all its deepened furrows the evidences of a sleepless night. His voice was hard and metallic as he addressed the Arab.

"Why are you here, Si Hamed ben Hamsa? You know what lies forever between your father's son and me!"

The sheik bent low again.

"Thou speakest hard words, O Frenchman," said he; "but I come not to thee. I come to the commander whom the great king has placed in charge of this fort."

"Speak, then!" said Gressoux coldly.

"The water in our well has ceased to flow. A bad spirit hovers over the spring. We have heard that thou hast in thy company a wise man who can speak to the hidden waters and cause them to flow again. I come to ask thee for his aid."

The captain turned to me.

"You are the man he wants, doctor," said he. "I congratulate you upon the first call for your professional knowledge."

I must explain here that I had discovered, or rather rediscovered, some days before this incident, an old, forgotten spring. It was no great professional triumph, but in that land of drouth the accident was important enough to send my name from mouth to mouth, and thus my fame had reached the Arabs in Duar.

"I am sorry to say, my friend," said I, replying to the Arab chief, "that I do not possess the power you ascribe to me."

Upon learning thus my distinguished identity the sheik made me the same respectful obeisance which he had already twice bestowed upon the captain.

"If Allah will, he can give thee power to help us," said he. "Come with me, and, if thou wilt, bring all thy friends with thee—even the white maiden over yonder. She will be welcome among my women."

The viscount and Lord Dudley had joined our group, and both declared themselves eagerly in favor of the expedition. I looked at the captain. He shrugged his shoulders, leaned against the well as if taking a position apart, while leaving us to decide the question to go or not to go, and showed by his whole demeanor that he did not wish to be consulted.

Nevertheless, feeling that his advice was necessary, I went up to him and asked for his opinion as to the safety of the expedition. I spoke in a whisper, and he answered in the same tone. He thought there could be no danger, as Si Hamed's tribe had lived in peace with their white neighbors for nearly twenty years.

The proposed visit had a piquant interest for me. I gave my assent and the party was formed.

Toward noon we and our appointed escort were ready to start. The ladies were delighted with the trip, and, after a ride of two or three hours, we reached Duar in high spirits.

The spring offered us an easier task than we had expected. It needed only a thorough digging-out to run almost as freely as ever. While Baron Griesheim and I superintended this operation, our tent was pitched.

The sheik exerted himself to entertain us with oriental hospitality. We were feasted and waited upon with every imaginable attention. The sheik's own slaves brought me, as a present, a handsome carpet. Si Hamed had conducted the ladies in person to the quarters of the women of the tribe, where they were welcomed with every kindness.

Toward evening we were made the spectators of a wild equestrian game, in which the entire tribe joined. In the course of the game, each mounted Arab rode madly up to the spot where our ladies were safely and comfortably seated, curbed his horse before them and lowered his lance almost to the earth.

The ladies were filled with enthusiastic admiration, particularly for the sheik, whose noble carriage distinguished him from his followers in any part of the field. The Arab chief was not slow to return the tribute. Again and again, his eyes were fixed, as if spell-bound, upon the beautiful features of Fräulein von Reichshoff; again and again, he found pretext for approaching her.

After nightfall, as we sat around our camp-fire, Jeannet (her sister was privileged to call her so, and why not I in this story) regarded his tall form somewhat uneasily as it loomed up before her in the firelight, and said aside to the viscountess:

"The sheik's eyes terrify me. Wherever I look, I encounter them. I wish we were safe in the fort again!"

When we left our quarters in the morning, the first thing that greeted our eyes was an immense wreath of red heath-roses, which hung over the door of Jeannet's

tent. She seemed not to notice it; but when the men offered to take it down, before removing the tent, the sheik rode up swiftly upon his fiery horse, dislodged the wreath with a skillful thrust of his lance, and, with another no less skillful turn, dropped it in Jeannet's lap. A vivid red dyed the young girl's face at this rather aggressive testimony of the Arab chief's admiration, and she would hardly have thanked Si Hamed for his poetic offering had not her sister prompted her to do so. At the urgent suggestion of the viscountess, she took one of the roses from the wreath and secured it in her belt.

Lord Dudley stood by during this little scene, and did not appear to notice it; but his face grew ashen pale and his eyes looked into space as though some horrid vision had enchained them. I asked him if he felt ill. He shuddered and shook his head for sole reply.

We started on our homeward march at about eight o'clock. Si Hamed, with twenty of his followers, accompanied us. Griesheim, the viscount and the ladies rode ahead. Lord Dudley and I brought up the rear. The sheik rode first on one side of our little column and then on the other, the activity of his horse carrying him from one position to another so quickly that he seemed to be omnipresent.

Lord Dudley was unusually silent and thoughtful, but when I called his attention to the fact that Si Hamed's eyes, whithersoever he wheeled his horse, never left Jeannet's face, he replied:

"You see, doctor, even this child of the desert cannot resist her."

After a pause he added: "She loves Griesheim," and his face grew a shade paler as he spoke. I reached out my hand to him. He understood the unspoken sympathy and returned the pressure of my grasp.

We had ridden some distance in silence, when loud greetings ahead surprised us, and upon looking forward for an explanation we saw Captain Gressoux, with a small company, riding toward us at full gallop.

He seemed anxious and excited, and, as he reached our end of the column, we cried together: "What is it, captain? Why have you come to meet us?"

"Bad news from the south!" he exclaimed, speaking low, so as not to alarm the ladies. "Several tribes near Halsa are up in arms. I did not consider your escort strong enough to insure your safety, so I have come to strengthen it. I am glad the insurrection has not, as it appears, reached us. But what is that?"

The sheik and his men, pirouetting upon their nimble steeds, were enclosing the group ahead of us in an ever narrowing circle. Lord Dudley smiled.

"They are exhibiting their equestrian skill in appreciation of the beauty and condescension of the ladies," he said.

"It means treachery!" hissed the captain between his set teeth, and he put spurs to his horse and darted forward like a ball from a gun.

At the same moment, the sheik shot like lightning between the two ladies, snatched Jeannet from her saddle, placed her before him on his own, and flew with her across the plain, while his followers intercepted her protectors and hindered the pursuit. A wild cry from the captured maiden, a mingling of shots and a confused stamping of horses amid clouds of dust followed. The scene was maddening.

In a moment, two of the Arabs lay dead upon the ground; two riderless horses scampered off in opposite directions; the viscount's arm hung, disabled, at his side; and the Arabs gave way and followed their chief with the fleetness of the wind. Our party was divided. The viscountess must be taken care of. A few started in chase of the fugitives, but immediately wheeled about and turned back for orders.

For a moment, consternation held us paralyzed. Gressoux and Dudley were the first to recover their senses.

"You, Lieutenant d'Alinge," said the captain quickly, "conduct my lady the viscountess back to the fort. Let Hussanville assume command there, while

you take twenty men and get to Duar as quickly as you can. Take possession there, if the place is not already forsaken. Let Sergeant Alland leave the station with twenty men and await us on the Urgla. The rest of you—forward!"

Far on the horizon a vanishing something drew us on. Around us, the waste; in our hearts, dismay; onward we swept! Gressoux, Griesheim and I kept together in the mad chase. Lord Dudley was far ahead. His English thoroughbred seemed hardly to touch the earth. The viscount and our escort fell farther and farther behind upon their somewhat heavier beasts.

In the distance, the blue hill-tops told us where the Urgla wound its silvery course. Our only hope of rescuing Jeannet that day, lay in overtaking her captors before they could reach those heights; for, once there, a hundred hiding-places awaited them.

As often as we sought the captain's face for encouragement, we read there misgiving instead. Our wild gallop over the rough plain was telling upon our jaded and footsore horses. They were showing signs of fatigue, and the distance between pursuers and pursued had scarcely diminished.

At last, the Arabs disappeared entirely from our view among the mountains, still so painfully far off. Lord Dudley seemed first to appreciate the hopelessness of the chase. He slacked his reins and allowed us to come up with him.

"It is useless, captain," he said with a strange calmness in his voice and manner. "We should do better to spare our horses."

"You are right," replied Gressoux. "We will go more slowly, and take counsel on the way." The escort caught up with us. Their horses were nearly exhausted. The viscount's arm was bleeding freely, and he could hardly maintain his seat in the saddle. In spite of his earnest protestations, the captain ordered him back to the fort, with two companions, who first bound up his wound as best they could.

On the banks of the Urgla we halted, and held a

council of war. Gressoux was for waiting until the sergeant should arrive. Griesheim vehemently opposed the delay, and would have set off alone to continue the pursuit but for the captain's almost peremptory intervention. Overcome with the agony of suspense, the young man threw himself upon the grass and buried his face in his hands.

The captain sent a few of his men across the Urgla. The rest remained on the near bank. Waiting was misery to us all. In every breast lay something of the pain that overwhelmed poor Griesheim, and yet there was nothing else to be done.

Lord Dudley was the only man among us capable of advising with the captain as to what was our best course. The sergeant and his men could hardly arrive before evening. The captain thought it would be best to wait until moonrise before resuming the chase. Dudley was of the same opinion. Griesheim listened in silence. His eyes stared blankly ahead in the direction taken by the kidnappers. It seemed as though despair would craze him.

Lord Dudley regarded him sympathetically from time to time. At last, he stood suddenly beside him and laid a hand upon his shoulder.

"Come with me, Griesheim," said he. "I have something to say to you."

Mechanically the baron followed him, and when they were out of hearing of the rest of us, Dudley spoke.

"My friend, you and I have been so unfortunate as to lay our hearts upon the same altar. Only one can prosper in his suit, and we both know to whom the happiness of her love has fallen. I know that Jeannet's heart is yours, and that if any man can be worthy of such a possession, you are worthy of it."

A gleam of appreciation flickered in Griesheim's stony eyes as he returned the young Englishman's glance and waited for him to proceed.

"My friend," continued Dudley, "it is given to me to relieve you in the agony of this hour. The woman you love will suffer no harm; but before to-morrow's

sunrise Si Hamed ben Hamsa and I will both be in the other world."

The baron came out of his lethargy for a moment and gazed upon his companion in astonishment. Dudley smiled a quiet, assured smile and continued:

"More than one in our family has been gifted with that strange power called second sight. Be incredulous if you will, Griesheim, but I know the result of our expedition as well as you will when it is ended. It came to me this morning in a vision. I have had such visions before, and I know what they portend. I foresaw my brother's death. I knew the hour when my sister would depart this life—and was helpless to save her, though her death was the result of an accident—and now I know that my own end is near. The Arab and I are both the children of death this night. And now, Griesheim, give me your hand! Make Jeannet as happy as I would have striven to——"

He ceased speaking, unable to proceed. In the same moment the sergeant with his Zouaves came galloping up. The captain reviewed them thankfully. They were the best men under his command—well-tried veterans, every one. In the meantime, the scouts that had been sent ahead had returned with news of the trail. At eleven o'clock the moon arose and we started on.

Gressoux divided the men into two bodies, one of which, under the brave old sergeant, was to follow the trail directly. The other party, including ourselves, was to attempt an ambush.

In the direction of the Arabs' flight, the captain explained, there was only a foot-path over the mountain, and few men could follow it in the darkness. The robbers had probably been compelled to wait for the moon, as we had done. At a certain distance from our halting-place this path was crossed by the Um-er-Gebia, a deep-cut mountain torrent which could only be forded in that spot. Our effort must be to reach the ford first and waylay them there.

Griesheim shrugged his shoulders hopelessly.

"Our long rest will cost us dear!" he said, bitterly.

"How can we hope now to reach the ford before them?"

"We shall reach the ford before them," said the captain quietly. "They have been compelled by their superstitious fears to make a detour, rather than pass by night through a certain ravine where their dead lie buried. We can take the shorter route and intercept them."

It was a rough climb that lay before us, over the knolls and through the gulleys. Firmly we kept to our saddles, and watchfully we managed the reins along the difficult route. Often an apparently impassable mountain-wall faced us, seeming to peremptorily cut off further progress. But the captain knew the country well, and always led us straight to the only point of passage.

At last, the lay of the land changed for the better. The country became more level and easily travelled, the gray glimmer of dawn began to dim the moonlight, the roaring of the Um-er-Gebia was heard issuing from its deep and narrow rocky bed at no great distance ahead, and we knew that we were near the ford.

The captain called a halt, and sent the horses back to await us at an opening in the road which we had passed a few minutes previously. He then proceeded to find hiding-places for his men. Among the rocks which bordered the mountain torrent near the ford were fissures and grottoes which answered our purpose. One of these concealed twenty of our men. We, the leaders of the expedition, found a niche a little nearer to the path. Gressoux cautioned us to make no sortie until he should give the word.

"Our policy," said he, "is to allow the first comers to pass the ford unmolested, and to betray our presence only when the sheik and his prey appear. Not a shot must be fired. It must be a hand-to-hand conflict."

He stationed Griesheim beside himself, fearing lest the young man's impatience might prove too great for his obedience. The plan of ambush once generally

comprehended, and our several stations selected, we lapsed into silence and resigned ourselves once more to the anxious duty of waiting.

We had not arrived too soon, for not a quarter-of-an-hour had elapsed when a couple of shots were heard, followed by the clatter of hoofs and the sudden arrival of the Arab troop, with the sergeant and his men in hot pursuit.

First, a single Arab, on a fleeter steed than those of his brethren, shot up to the ford, slacked his pace, guided his horse carefully across and paused on the other side to look back. Then a few others came up, in wild disorder and hastened to join him.

Then—oh, culminating moment of agonized hope and fear! for the captain's terrible experience came to the minds of us all—the sheik himself came swiftly up with his captive before him in the saddle. One thing we all knew, and one other no man could surely foretell: the Arab chief was doomed to speedy death—but who could save Jeannet from the stroke of his murderous dagger when he should see that his final moment had come?

Just before he reached us the Arab paused upon a small eminence, turned, and seemed to give some order to his followers. At the same moment, the first arrival, probably a scout, rode back to the water's edge and tried to pierce the shadows among the rocks and bushes, as though he suspected the presence of an enemy. Then he retired, apparently reassured, and the sheik rode on.

The next few moments were so many stages in the most thrilling experience of my life. First, I noticed that Jeannet proudly held her seat in the saddle, with but little support from her swarthy captor. Then I distinctly saw her pale features, in which a haughty resolution was as clearly visible as the despair which blanched her cheeks. I next shuddered with a sudden fear lest a ball from the rifle of one of the sergeant's own men should reach her warm young heart. Then

came a loud "*En avant!*" from the captain, and in an instant we were locked in a fierce hand-to-hand struggle with the ravishers.

The battle was a short one. Our presence was a complete surprise to the Arabs.

Lord Dudley was the first to reach Si Hamed's side. With a speed and vigor that seemed superhuman, he caught the Arab by the neck, and bent his head forward until it seemed as though his back must break, at the same time snatching Jeannet from the saddle with the left arm. Wild with rage, Si Hamed swung his lance in the air. Griesheim rushed forward, but too late to stay the descent of the deadly steel. Quick as thought, Dudley had deposited Jeannet upon the ground a little to the rear and brought his left hand back to parry the blow; but quicker still, it fell! Both his knees were broken by the powerful stroke of the lance and he sank to the ground, dragging Si Hamed with him from the saddle. In the very act of falling, the Arab snatched his dagger from its sheath and buried it to the hilt in Dudley's breast. In the next instant Griesheim gave the savage steel for steel, and the two chief combatants lay side by side upon the field.

With streaming eyes, Jeannet bent over her devoted rescuer and took his hand. With the feeble strength that remained to him he pressed hers to his lips, and all the passion and despair of his love for her lay for a moment in his eyes ere they glazed in death. A few seconds later he had breathed his last, and Jeannet's horrified countenance was buried in Griesheim's bosom.

The Arab tribe, seeing their chief fall, broke away and fled for their lives, with the sergeant still in pursuit. The rising sun shed his first beams upon them as they disappeared over a hill-top beyond the Um-er-Gebia, and then looked down upon the corpse of him who had knowingly laid down his life upon the altar of love and chivalry.

. . . . . .

It was not until the end of September that the Arab

tribes were reduced to order. We occupied the fort until the last sign of disturbance was over, and then we turned our faces homeward.

Six months later, a wedding was celebrated in the chateau of the Viscount de Marsac. We were all present, even the captain, who had yielded to Jeannet's persuasions and taken a leave of absence for the occasion.

As I looked upon the happy pair, in all their youth and beauty and prosperity, standing hand-in-hand to receive the nuptial blessing, I traveled back in imagination to that wild scene on the banks of the Um-er-Gebia—and the bride joined me there. Her face grew pensive and her gaze wandered off into space, while a tender sadness crept into her beautiful eyes, even at the moment when she and her chosen lover were pronounced man and wife. Recalled to herself, her returning glance met mine, and we mutely exchanged recollections. The young baron, too, had followed her thoughts to that distant scene, for, with a light pressure of the hand, he whispered, "Don't think of that now, dearest!"

The next summer I visited the young couple at their beautiful home in Alsace. In the baron's study there hung a picture, framed in mourning. It is a painting by a master hand, copied from the original of a portrait of Lord Dudley which has its place in the boudoir of the young nobleman's mother. Husband and wife led me to the picture, and stood silently by while I studied the noble features, so familiar to us all.

"He is our friend still," said Jeannet softly, as we turned away.

It will be a dull day for the world when the fine old superstitions about ghosts have entirely disappeared. In the merciless light of disciplined reason the old shadows are growing very faint, but here are some merry sailor-boys who were sure of the existence of at least one uncanny spirit. Their adventures have been described for ROMANCE by Lieut. J. H. Scott, U. S. R. M.

THE SHIP CALIFORNIA'S GHOST.

It was in the second dog-watch, on one of those lovely spring evenings, when everything seems cheerful, and the very air is conducive to a comfortable position and a good "gam."*

We were all youngsters, none of us having been at sea more than three years, but we were as salt as salt could be; and from constant practice, our language was thoroughly tinctured with the brine. Our vessel was lying in the stream off one of the old whaling towns, at whose wharves there still lay some decaying whalers, relics of a bygone occupation. As we cast our eyes around, looking for some one to play our pranks on, they naturally fell on some of these old packets.

Chris, between puffs at a pipe, from which he was "smuggling a smoke," said: "Those old packets have seen some hot times, boys. Why, some of those vessels were worse than pirates to sail in, and many's the man that's been killed by the mates and boat-steerers, and logged as having been lost overboard. Now there's the old California. She was notorious in that way. The gunner was a boy aboard her, and he says that he knew of three that were killed, and logged as having been lost from a topsail in a squall. And that reminds me. You remember how Harry said that he didn't believe a ghost would appear if you stuck your knife in the keelson of a ship of that kind at midnight. Now

*A sea-term for the spinning of yarns and skylarking.

I do. Here's your chance, Harry. Suppose you try it to-night, or will you back down, and own up that you are afraid to?"

Of course Harry said he wasn't afraid, and would do it just to prove that there was no such a thing as a ghost, and, moreover, he would do it to-night if he could get leave.

So we sat around, discussing the details of the expedition. Everything was to be as favorable as we could make it. We finally arranged that all that could get liberty would form a party, escort Harry ashore, and see that everything was worked in a ship-shape fashion.

Four of us, Chris, Harry, Jim, and myself, managed to get liberty, as the first-lieutenant was in a splendid humor. As soon as we could get ready, we obtained a boat and started for shore. We were afraid that he might change his mind, and not let us go.

Our preparations were simple and soon made—about five fathoms of rope and a stout sheath-knife.

As it was only eight o'clock when we stepped on the wharf, we thought it would be best to look over the ground a little, so that we could work more easily, and not have the trouble of feeling our way around in the dark. We went on the wharf, to which the California was fast, and found the best place to get on board. Then, stowing away the knife and rope where we could readily find them, we proceeded up to the town and looked around for some way to kill time.

We made a tarpaulin muster, and finding enough of a party and a fund for the theatre, we all went.

For a half-hour or so thereafter, we wandered about the town, amusing ourselves as best we might. At ten minutes to twelve, we approached the California's wharf.

There did not seem to be any question as to which one was to go first, up to this time; but, on arriving at the head of the wharf, each of us had various excuses for letting someone else go first. This was settled, finally, by our going four abreast. In this man-

ner we neared the vessel, clambered over the side, and got the rope ready to lower Harry down.

Harry, knife in hand, took his seat in the bowline, and catching a turn over a cavil, I lowered away handsomely, until I felt it slack. Then, drawing it up, I let it lie on deck. I then went across to the other fellows, who were peering over the coamings, and we silently and rather nervously waited for eight bells.

I don't think we waited for more than a minute, before eight bells was struck on board some vessel in the stream. The last stroke had hardly reached us when our hearts almost ceased to beat, and the blood in our veins was frozen, by a piercing yell of horror from the hold.

For a second or two I was so weak that I could not move. I believe my brain stood still. But as soon as I regained my strength, I jumped up and ran. I fell over the bulwarks to the dock, in my hurry, and running up the wharf I stumbled over pieces of timber, getting all sorts of cuts and bruises, but I did not feel them. As I ran, I could hear footsteps behind me as if in pursuit, and I redoubled my exertions to escape. From the wharf I fled up town, overturning belated wayfarers, and heeding nothing until I reached the hotel bar-room.

They said that my face was as white as chalk, yet covered with perspiration. I was muddy, my clothes were torn and I could hardly speak for lack of breath. My heart throbbed, and my hand trembled so much that I spilt the drink which they gave me to revive me. Then I sank into a chair perfectly helpless.

Suddenly there was a scramble outside and the door was thrown open, admitting Chris, with Jim close behind. They were, if possible, in a worse condition than I had been. I beckoned them over to me and asked for Harry.

"I guess that he must still be on board," they both said. "You hauled the rope up again after lowering him down." Nobody spoke for a moment, and my nerve began to return. At last I rose and said, "We can't

desert Harry, fellows, and if the evil one himself is down there, we won't let it be said that we left a shipmate in the lurch."

That was enough. Our senses seemed to rally. The trembling left us, and without another word we silently proceeded back to the wharf. When we arrived alongside the California, we heard Harry begging us to pull him up. We scrambled over the side, lowered the end of the rope down to him, and we soon had him on deck. He was so weak that we had to help him even to walk up to the hotel. Nothing was said until we were safe in one of the rooms.

Harry was a pitiful sight to see. His cap was gone; his clothes were soaking wet with bilge-water; every drop of blood seemed to have left his face; his eyes had a scared look which it was pathetic to see; and he trembled so that he couldn't stand up, but fell in a heap on the bed.

After he had regained some of his color, and the trembling had left him, in answer to our many questions he gave us the following account of his experience:

"You know how dark it was on deck. Well, the hold was so dark that the air seemed thick; and there was a smell of bilge-water and general mustiness, that almost overpowered me. As soon as I landed on the 'skin of the hold,' I slipped out of the bowline, and began wading through the bilge-water. I stumbled over the old 'dunnage,' and felt my way to the keelson near the mainmast. I had hardly reached it, when I heard eight bells start, so I raised the knife, prepared to sink her in to the hilt and have a good laugh on you.

"As the last stroke sounded, I struck with all the force I could, and right from under my feet came a loud groan. I yelled, and must have lost my senses and fallen. For when I came to myself, I was lying in the water, and if it had been deeper, should have been drowned.

"As I slowly recovered consciousness, I wondered where I could be. I felt around, and could recognize

nothing that was familiar to my touch. Then like a dream it all came back to me. Could it be true, or was I dreaming? I stood up and tried to walk, but kept stumbling over the dunnage. Then I knew it wasn't a dream, and I searched for the rope, and called to you, but there was no answer. Fear took complete possession of me, and I shrieked and implored you for God's sake to take me up. But nothing disturbed that awful stillness. I became panic-stricken. Cold perspiration broke out all over me. I trembled so that I could scarcely stand. My mind was becoming unbalanced; and if you had not returned when you did, I believe I should have gone mad from fear. Then I heard you scrambling over the side, and my mind returned to almost its usual state. Fellows, I'll own up there are ghosts, and I trust that it will never be my misfortune to see or hear another."

I couldn't sleep any that night, but tossed and turned continually. In spite of myself, my mind would revert to the horrors which we had gone through that evening, until, in order to quiet myself, I had to rise and light the gas. I paced the room until daylight. Then I lay down and slept. The others, I think, did the same.

Before going on board, we decided never to speak of our experience, but to keep the dreadful story to ourselves. We managed to get on board without creating any suspicions, and when we sat down at the mess we evaded all the questions and jokes that were made.

Harkins was glancing over a newspaper and he threw it aside saying, "Here's a go. Weren't you fellows to go aboard the California last night?"

We answered, "Yes, why?"

"Why! the papers say a dead tramp was found there this morning. He seemed to have fallen down the main hatchway, and lay near the heel of the mainmast."

Suppose Harry had found him there? Suppose that his hand had touched that man's hand or face as he was groping around? It was not a pleasant thought.

In the Atlanta *Constitution* appeared not long ago the tale of this exciting adventure, which is almost enough to make one's heart stop beating.

HUNTED BY A MAD HOUND.

"THE man-eater is mad!"

I looked at the tall Texan apprehensively.

"Are you certain?" I asked.

"I know it. I had my suspicions yesterday, and now there is no doubt of it."

This was serious. The man-eater was the largest and most ferocious bloodhound in Texas. It was hard enough to control him at any time; but mad—I shuddered at the thought!

My week's visit at the Bolton ranch had satisfied me that my host really cared for only two things in the world—his daughters and the man-eater.

"Where is Miss Sallie?" I inquired, anxiously.

"Oh, that's all right," replied Bolton, carelessly. "Sallie took her pony and went off for a ride an hour ago, and the hound is safe enough. I took him by the collar just now, and locked him up where he won't get at anybody. But it breaks me up, old fellow; I wouldn't lose him for anything."

My interest began to weaken. Miss Sallie was safe, and the dog was locked up. What was a bloodhound to me? If the savage monster died, so much the better.

I walked off to the stable. A ride over the prairie was not to be missed on such a morning, and there would be a chance of riding back with Sallie.

But I was doomed to disappointment. My horse was lame. It did not take long to convince me that somebody had been riding him the night before.

Just then Pedro came in sight. The ugly little Mexican gave a start when he saw me, and looked away.

"You yellow rascal!" I shouted; "you had my horse last night?"

"No, señor."

"You are lying!"

"No, by all the saints, señor."

"Then, where were you at midnight?"

"I was attending to my business," snapped Pedro.

He looked so viciously mean and so impudent that I gave him a light cut with my whip and told him to get out of my sight. He muttered something and slunk off. There was no other animal that I cared to ride, and I made up my mind to walk.

I had left the ranch several hundred yards behind me when I turned and looked back. Even at that distance I could plainly recognize Pedro. He was walking around a little cabin back of the kitchen, and was apparently peeping through the cracks.

"Looking at the man-eater," I said to myself. "It is a good thing the beast is locked up."

The bracing morning air and the level prairie stretching out before me for miles tempted me to take a long walk. A long way off I could see a hill, the only one in all that flat country. Why not climb it and see what was on the other side? Perhaps Sallie was over there.

So I walked on with swinging strides for a couple of miles.

Suddenly I came to a dead halt.

"That sounds like the man-eater's bark!" I exclaimed. Again I heard it, and stopped a moment.

For an instant my muscles were paralyzed—I was absolutely unable to move.

A thousand horrible thoughts rushed into my mind. If this mad bloodhound was on my track, my case was hopeless. I could not get back to the ranch—there was not a tree in sight, and the hill was still miles away. What was to be done?

I summoned all my strength, and made a run at the top of my speed. I kept on as long as I could, and then paused to rest and listen. The man-eater was coming my way, but not much faster than I could run.

I resumed my flight. Would a mad dog have his usual keen instincts about him? Would he pursue the trail, or become confused and give it up?

These thoughts inspired me with a faint hope. If the dog's slow progress enabled me to reach the hill, where there was timber, I could climb a tree, or possibly he would be missed and his master would ride in pursuit.

From one point, where there was a gentle rise in the prairie, I could see in the distance a moving speck.

It was the man-eater steadily following my trail!

My surmise turned out to be partly correct. The animal seemed to be at fault. He would stop and run back a few yards and branch off aimlessly in every direction. But this did not last long. After a series of eccentric movements, the hound would get on my track again and rush forward. He was gaining, and my chances of reaching the hill began to look gloomy.

For the next fifteen minutes I did some good running, but when I turned to cast a backward glance, I could see the dog more plainly than ever.

One thing encouraged me; he did not appear to see me, but blundered on in a clumsy, dazed sort of way.

There were no streams to cross—nothing that would throw him off the scent. I had no weapon, only a small pocket-knife, and a fight with a mad dog was out of the question. My strength was giving out, and I felt that the end was not far off.

When I again looked back, the dog was not more than three hundred yards away, and the base of the hill was still a mile off.

A spasm of terror seized me, but, to my surprise, the great brute suddenly sat down on his haunches and howled plaintively. It was a minute or two before he found the trail again. If his malady had dimmed his sight and confused him, there was still a chance for me, but it was a slim one. With a tremendous effort I broke forward on my last run. This time I would reach the hill, or turn at the last moment and die, making a vain effort to choke the monster. The blood

rushed to my head, and I could hardly see anything as I darted on at the top of my speed.

The hound was rapidly making headway, and at last seemed to have me in view. A glance over my shoulder showed him not a hundred yards behind.

Everything was in a whirl. Somebody was riding out from behind the hill and coming my way. The hat, the riding-habit—I could not be mistaken—it was Sallie Bolton. But my race was nearly run. Even with help in sight I could bear up no longer. The girl was riding like the wind, and I could see that she had a lasso in one hand.

I knew that this cattle-queen, as the cow-boys called her, could do anything almost with a lasso, but would she get there in time?

The man-eater came bounding on, and Sallie rode straight at him like a little thunderbolt. She whirled the lasso over and over around her head, and—but it was too late—I could hear the dog panting behind me!

A wave of darkness rolled over me as I fell to the ground, just as I heard something swish through the air.

But I was up in a minute—just in time to see my rescuer give a pull that tightened the lasso about the dog's neck. A few convulsions, and the dog was strangled—dead within six feet of me. My thanks were cut short by the appearance of a light wagon driven by one of Bolton's neighbors, who offered to take me back to the ranch, an invitation not to be declined under the cirumstances.

Sallie Bolton rode on ahead, and when I reached the house, her father was waiting to congratulate me upon my escape. "It was Pedro's work," he said. "He unlocked the door and set the dog on your trail—at least, I think so. He had a key, and he has disappeared."

Undoubtedly it was Pedro. He had been trying to pay me back.

I have never seen the Boltons since my adventure with the man-eater, but I am not likely to forget the little cattle queen while I live.

This fable will be of equal interest to both poor and rich. It is told by Richard Volkmann, and was translated from the German by Alma Lazzari for *The Christian Union.*

THE RICH MAN'S VISION.

JUST at the time when the earth was full of joy, and it was hardest to die, for sweet flowers were blooming, two men took the road to heaven, a rich man and a poor one. They had lived next door to each other on earth; the poor man in a hut, while a sumptuous house was the rich man's abode. But death makes no difference, and so it happened that they both died at the same time, and now they were walking in silence near each other.

But the road was very steep, and the rich man found it hard work, and soon fell behind. The poor man reached heaven quickest, but he was afraid to knock, so he sat down quietly and thought: "Let me wait for my neighbor; perhaps he dares knock at the gate." After a long time the rich man arrived, and, finding heaven closed, began to shake the gate violently, making such a noise that Peter came running breathlessly, and, on seeing the two men, said to the rich one:

"That was you, no doubt, who could not wait. I should not think you would care to make yourself so conspicuous, for we have no good reports of you in heaven. But we will see what next. Come both in"—and Peter helped the poor man rise.

They found themselves in an immense hall, with many doors, and benches along the walls.

"Sit here and rest," said Peter, "and profit well by my absence to decide what you wish, for your wish will be fully granted. Only consider well, for there is no chance later. And forget nothing before it is too late."

When Peter returned, he asked if they had made up their minds. The rich man jumped up at once, and said he wanted a magnificent house, better than a king's

palace, and the best food every day—roasts and vegetables and jams and chocolate; then a comfortable arm-chair, and a beautiful wrapper of green satin, and the daily paper, so he might know the news. Peter looked at him sadly, and asked:

"And nothing else?"

"Oh, yes; I also want my cellars full of gold."

"Very well," and Peter opened one of the many doors, and led the rich man into just such a palace as he had asked for, and told him he would find all as he had wished it to be. And so it was. But, when year after year had passed, and he had counted all his gold, and had every day a good dinner, and the paper had lost its interest, because it talked of people and things that were new to him, he found the time long, and he yawned.

"What can I do?" he thought. But he had all he had asked for, and he could have nothing else. And a hundred, two hundred, and then a thousand years passed. At last Peter opened the door again.

"Well," said he, "how do you like it?"

Then the man became very angry. "How do I like it?" he said. "I do not like it at all—I hate it! How could you have such a miserable place in heaven?"

"In heaven!" says Peter. "But you are in hell, for you have wished for your own hell. Did you think we burned all sinners? Oh, no; those were old times. We now let people choose their own hell."

Terrified, the man sinks in his chair. Oh, yes, he knows now he is in hell, and eternity before him. He turns pitifully to Peter, and says:

"And how long is eternity?"

"Without end."

He began to weep bitterly, and Peter, feeling sorry, led him to the top of the house, and there, through a crack in the wall, he saw into heaven, but he had to stand on the tip of his toes and stretch his neck. There sat God in all his glory and all his angels round him. And all was joy!

"Oh, how beautiful!" cries the poor rich man. "But tell me, Peter, who is the man sitting at God's feet?"

"That is the poor man who lived near you on earth. After I had given you time to wish, and returned to ask him what he wanted, he begged for a little bench to sit at the feet of God, and his wish was granted, just as yours was granted to you."

And Peter walked noiselessly away before the rich man was aware of it, for he was still gazing into heaven, standing painfully on the very tip of his toes.

And when Peter returned after a thousand years, the rich man was still looking longingly into heaven, forgetting all other things, and unmindful of pain or fatigue. He did not hear Peter, who, putting his hand on the man's shoulder, said gently:

"Come, you have stood long enough—you are forgiven. I am to take you to heaven. Don't you think you might have chosen it from the beginning?"

And at last the poor and the rich live again near each other.

Not only a strong arm but a good outfit of brains must have belonged to the brave hunter, whose exploits, as related below, first appeared in the Cincinnati *Enquirer*.

TWO BEARS AND A HICKORY STICK.

On the top of Smoky Mountain, at least five miles from any settlement or farm, in the midst of the wildest part of this rough mountainous section, there is an old hunter named Job Smiley. Smiley is at least 65 years of age, but the years hang lightly on his stalwart frame. He stands six feet three inches in his stocking feet, and has unusually long and muscular arms and legs. He carries no extra flesh, although he weighs perhaps two-hundred-and-thirty pounds. Smiley's life had been spent in the wilds of the mountains, hunting, fishing and trapping, and many are the reminiscences of tough fights and narrow escapes he has had. One of the most interesting is this account of his fight with two full-grown black bears:

I was out hunting as usual one day on one of the cross ridges of the Big Smoky when I got on the trail of a big buck, which I followed for two hours before I got close enough to shoot. When I did get the chance, the buck was about seventy yards below me on a narrow shelf, which overhung a rocky precipice.

I drew a bead on the buck, and dropped him dead in his tracks. Then I did a very foolish thing, and that was this: I laid my gun down against a log, not even taking time to load it, and climbed down to the spot where the buck lay. I got there safely, and so did a couple of thundering big bears about the same time. They had a den in the side of the mountain close by, and my shot alarmed them or they had been "laying" for the deer themselves. Well, they were there and so was I, and, unfortunately, I was without a weapon. I saw

there was going to be trouble, and that I couldn't get back to my gun, so I looked about me quietly to see if I could find anything with which to defend myself.

Down close by my feet I saw a big hickory limb, which had been broken off in some of the fearful wind storms so common on the mountain. The stick was about five feet long and nearly three inches thick. Now, you can just imagine that I got hold of that stick mighty quick. It was fresh and sound and an excellent weapon against one bear; but two—I had very serious doubts about the outcome in that case. This all occurred in a good deal less time than it takes to tell it—in fact, in less time than that both brutes were coming at me with open mouths. I waited until the first one rose to his feet, which they do when they are in for a fight, when I gave him a rap on the side of the head that knocked him down. Then I drew back my club just in time to strike at the other one. Somehow that bear knocked that blow off, and he did it so quickly that the force I had given it came near making me lose my balance. As it was, the infernal brute gave me a "swipe" with his forepaw which tore my hunting shirt at my shoulder into shoestrings and ripped my hide and flesh from the shoulder half way down my arm.

Before the bear could close in on me, however, I sprang back and drew up my club ready for another blow. The first one I had knocked over was now on his feet, and both of them, having smelled the blood, were in savage earnest, and it was now a fight to the death. They both came at me on their hind feet, about six feet apart and about the same distance from me. As they got close enough to reach, I swung the big club down on a level, and just as quick as I possibly could I gave one of them a thundering poke square between the eyes. This was the fellow on my left. Then I swung the club to the right and got in a pretty good one on the other one's neck. The bear I had struck between the eyes was badly hurt, as he lay right down and whined. I happened to turn my eyes in his direction, and this gave the other one an opportunity,

and the first I knew I was knocked backward and came near falling, with the bear close upon me. There was no getting away this time. He had his forepaws around my left arm and waist almost before I knew it. Fortunately my right hand was free, and I shortened the club and battered him over the head, while he clawed and bit me on the shoulder and across the back. We had it forward and back, the bear trying his best to get a hold on my neck or face, while I kept beating him over the head and body with the club. At last down he went on the ground; but just as I was going over, I fortunately struck the bear on one of his eyes and knocked it out. The pain made him loosen his hold, and he never got another, for I got on my feet as quickly as I could and brought that big club down square across his throat and killed him. I was pretty badly hurt and rather short of wind, but I knew I had better finish the other one mighty quick, for, if he got up and fairly at me again, I should be wiped out; so I jumped for him and got close to him just as he was getting on his feet. Lord! How I did batter that fellow! I knocked him over and pounded him until I was out of wind and the bear beaten almost into a jelly. Then I sat down and did what I never did before—keeled right over and fainted. I must have lain there an hour or more before I came to. It took two full hours to walk about two miles to my cabin, where, luckily for me, I found old Tom Blakelock, another hunter, laying out a supper for himself. Old Tom soon had me spread out on the shake-down in the corner, and then he went to work to wash my wounds and tie me together again. After he had fixed me up in some sort of shape Old Tom went to the place where I had the fight, and skinned the bears and hung them up. When he came back, the old fellow was dragging along three cubs about three months old. He had found the bears' den and captured the cubs, which he pulled out with a piece of rope that he always carried. That fight laid me up for about two months, but I came out as sound as ever.

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